

**Little Totmonslow Farm,
Tean, Stoke-on-Trent,
Staffordshire:
An Archaeological
Watching Brief**

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**Little Totmonslow Farm, Tean, Stoke-on-Trent, Staffordshire:
An Archaeological Watching Brief**

by
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SUMMARY

A watching brief was commissioned by Laurence R. Jay on works to construct a replacement dwelling at Little Totmonslow Farm, Tean, Stoke-on-Trent, Staffordshire (centred on NGR SJ 9926/3982). The watching brief was carried out by Birmingham University Field Archaeology Unit (BUFAU) in August and September 2002. An archaeological assessment of the site, carried out prior to its re-development, concluded that the site may contain archaeological remains dating from the prehistoric period onwards. More specifically, it was thought that the site may contain the remains of the burial mound, or 'low', which gives Totmonslow its name. Archaeological monitoring was carried out on several stages of the construction works, including the digging of trial holes and the stripping and excavation of the new driveway.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

This report outlines the findings of a watching brief which was commissioned by Laurence R. Jay in connection with building works for the construction of a replacement dwelling house at Little Totmonslow Farm, Tean, Stoke-on-Trent, Staffordshire (centred on NGR SJ 9926/3982). The watching brief was carried out by Birmingham University Field Archaeology Unit (BUFAU) in August and September 2002. The watching brief was required as the site was considered likely to contain archaeological remains of several periods. An archaeological assessment of the site, carried out prior to the commencement of re-development, indicated that the presence of prehistoric remains, possibly a burial mound, and Roman deposits was a possibility (Conway 2002). The archaeological monitoring of this development followed a written scheme of investigation prepared by BUFAU (BUFAU 2002). All archaeological work conducted on the site was carried out in accordance with the *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Watching Briefs* issued by the Institute of Field Archaeologists (IFA 1999).

2.0 LOCATION

Little Totmonslow Farm lies around two and a half miles south-west of Cheadle on the western edge of the village of Totmonslow in the Staffordshire Moorlands district (Figure 1). The Study Area lies midway between the larger villages of Upper Tean and Draycott-in-the-Moors on the road, formerly the A50 trunk route, between Uttoxeter and Stoke-on-Trent.

3.0 GEOLOGY AND TOPOGRAPHY

The village of Totmonslow lies at the southern edge of the northern upland area of Staffordshire at the beginnings of the South Pennine foothills (see Palliser 1976 figure 3). Little Totmonslow Farm itself lies on the northern side of the Blithe Valley, on a south-facing slope near the crest of an interfluvial ridge between two tributary streams of the River Blithe. The underlying geology of this area is Sherwood Group Sandstones, cross-bedded with pebbly sandstone and mudstone bands (British Geological Survey, Sheet 124 Ashbourne).

4.0 ARCHAEOLOGICAL & HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

A desk-based assessment of Little Totmonslow Farm was carried out prior to the granting of planning permission for the new building at the site (Conway 2002). The assessment showed that the site lay in an area of known prehistoric, Roman and Anglo-Saxon activity and concluded that there was the possibility that archaeological deposits of one or all these periods may be encountered. The assessment also showed that the site could also contain deposits relating to the medieval village at Totmonslow.

The Staffordshire Moorlands contain a high proportion of the prehistoric barrows which survive as earthworks within Staffordshire. It is known from antiquarian accounts and placename evidence that a barrow (SMR 1986), of probable prehistoric date, existed at some location in the village of Totmonslow up to the middle of the nineteenth century. Totmonslow is an old English placename, coined in the Anglo-Saxon period, which contains the placename element *hlāw* or 'low' which means barrow or mound. The name 'Totmonslow' has been interpreted as meaning 'Totman's burial mound'. The mound must have remained as a significant earthwork into the Anglo-Saxon period for it to have given rise to the name of this area. The precise location of this barrow and what shape it was is now unknown.

The site lies in an area of documented Roman activity. The southern boundary of the front garden of the farm is formed by the Roman road (SMR 1227) which ran from Little Chester, Derby, via Rocester to Chesterton near Stoke-on-Trent. It is argued that a Roman fort was sited at Draycott-in-the-Moors, immediately east of the farm, as it lies midway, and a day's march, between Rocester and Chesterton. Pottery and bone, attributed a Roman date by the antiquarian Stebbing Shaw, was found in Upper Tean in 1728.

Totmonslow has an Anglo-Saxon placename, so there was probably a settlement of some kind in the area during this period. However, its exact location is currently unknown. Anglo-Saxon activity in this area is further documented by the fact that Totmonslow was the moot point for one of the hundreds of Staffordshire. This hundred eventually took its name from its moot, becoming known throughout the medieval and post-medieval periods as Totmonslow Hundred.

Little is known of Totmonslow and the surrounding villages in the medieval period. There is no record that Totmonslow was ever a parish in its own right and it seems to have been one of many other, smaller, settlements included in the parish of Draycott-

in-the-Moors from the medieval period to the present day. The landscape around Tean, including Little Totmonslow Farm, seems to have been of a mixed character. Some of the land around Tean lay in the woods of the Baron of Stafford and the remainder was moorland. It is unclear whether the Study Area lay in the moor or the wood, or both. There are sixteenth century references to the village of Totmonslow existing in the medieval period, Erdeswicke's *Survey of Staffordshire* records that "Totmanslow is a small village, once very considerable, now famous only for a barrow". During the Post-medieval period the site of Little Totmonslow farm was in a large field. Cartographic evidence reveals that the plot was not built upon until the construction of the recently demolished house in the early nineteenth century.

5.0 AIMS

The archaeological watching brief was intended to provide a record of any archaeological deposits or features which might be present below the modern ground surface and to understand the history and significance of the archaeology of the site as a whole. It was thought possible that the Totmonslow barrow, known to have existed at some location around the village, may lie within the site and that archaeological deposits relating to it might be encountered during groundworks. Any archaeological remains that were affected by the development works were to be recorded in terms of their location, extent, date, character, condition, significance and quality to enable the preservation by record of any archaeological deposits encountered. Artefactual/ecofactual material was to be recovered from the site for long term conservation and future analysis.

6.0 METHOD

The construction works at Little Totmonslow Farm entailed the demolition of the existing house, the construction of a new dwelling on the same site, as well as the laying out of a new driveway on the eastern side of the garden. A watching brief was maintained on trial holes excavated to establish foundation design on the north, east and south sides of the house, and on ground works for the new driveway at the front of the house and on the east side of the garden. Following the stripping of topsoil and modern overburden the sub-soil was inspected for archaeological features and deposits. It was not possible to draw scale sections of the trial holes for health and safety reasons, however sketch sections form part of the site archive. All layers were recorded on *pro-forma* record sheets, and were supplemented by colour print photography. Spoil heaps were examined to recover any datable material present.

7.0 RESULTS

7.1 Trial Holes

Trial Hole 1 (Plate 1) was situated on the southern edge of the path in front of the recently demolished house (Figure 2). The trial hole was aligned east-west and measured 3.2m long, 1.2m wide and 2.7m deep. Layers 1004 to 1002 were interpreted as representing the uppermost layers of the underlying drift and solid geology of the area. Layer 1001 was interpreted as a probable ploughing horizon which had

developed at the interface between the topsoil and the natural gravel. All deposits were overlain by 0.3m of topsoil.

Context	Description	Depth	
		Top	Bottom
1004	Orange Sandstone	2.7m	-
1003	Clean red coarse sand with bands of light yellow sand	1.4m	2.7m
1002	coarse red sandy gravel	0.8m	1.4m
1001	Orange-brown gravelly sandy silt containing frequent large pebbles (subsoil layer)	0.3m	0.8m
1000	dark brown sandy silty topsoil	0.0m	0.3m

Table 1 Stratigraphic Sequence within Trial Hole 1

Trial Hole 2 (Plate 2) was situated to the rear of the main range of the recently demolished house (Figure 2). The trial hole was aligned southwest-northeast and measured 3.0m long, 1.2m wide and 2.6m deep. The same sequence of deposits noted in Trial Hole 1 were observed. Layers 2004 to 2002 were again identified as the uppermost layers of the underlying drift and solid geology of the area. Layer 2001 was interpreted as a probable ploughing horizon, and 0.3m of topsoil sealed the deposits.

Context	Description	Depth	
		Top	Bottom
2004	Orange Sandstone	2.6m	-
2003	Dark orange-brown coarse gravel, containing large pebbles	2.0m	2.6m
2002	Clean coarse red sand with bands of light yellow sand	0.4m	2.0m
2001	Orange-brown gravelly sandy silt containing frequent large pebbles	0.1/0.2m	0.4m
2000	Dark brown sandy silty topsoil	0.00m	0.1/0.2m

Table 2 Stratigraphic Sequence within Trial Hole 2

Trial Hole 3 (Plate 3) was situated on the eastern side of the existing house (Figure 2). The trial hole was aligned north-south and measured 3.1m long, 1.2m wide and 2.8m deep. Layers 3004 to 3002 were interpreted as representing the uppermost layers of

the underlying drift and solid geology of the area. Layer 3001 was interpreted as the same ploughing horizon identified in the other trial holes and, again, all deposits were overlain by 0.3m of topsoil.

Context	Description	Depth	
		Top	Bottom
3004	Orange Sandstone	2.8m	-
3003	Dark orange-brown coarse sandy gravel	2.2m	2.8m
3002	Clean coarse red sand with bands of light yellow sand	0.9m	2.2m
3001	Orange-brown gravelly sandy silt containing frequent large pebbles	0.4m	0.9m
3000	Dark brown sandy silty topsoil	0.0m	0.4m

Table 3 Stratigraphic Sequence within Trial Hole 3

No archaeological features or deposits were located during the digging of the three trial holes.

7.2 Groundworks for New Driveway

The construction of the new driveway required the cutting of a trench through the bank of the hedge at the southern end of the garden to enable access from the roadside (Figure 2). This meant the removal of approximately 1.2m of deposits from the hedge bank adjacent to the road. The level of the driveway gradually shelved up from the hedge toward the house (Plates 4 and 5), at which point only the topsoil and a small part of the subsoil were removed to a depth of approximately 0.4m of the original ground surface.

The topsoil in the area of the new driveway was stripped under archaeological supervision, the subsoil layer exposed was examined for archaeological features or deposits. No archaeological features or deposits were observed in the area stripped for the new driveway. No finds were recovered from the topsoil. The topsoil and subsoil layer were identical to those encountered in the trial holes. The topsoil was slightly deeper, 0.35m thick, by the hedge. This area of the site lay downslope from Trial Hole 1, and a greater depth of topsoil probably accumulated there due to wash.

The section through the hedge bank was monitored. However, it was not possible to get a clear picture of the layers that made up the bank as they were heavily disturbed by root action from the hedge itself and by post-holes for the fence. The integrity of the uppermost layers of the bank were further compromised as the hedge and fence were pulled out using the machine prior to the groundworks commencement.

8.0 DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

Archaeological deposits or features were not observed during monitoring of groundworks at Little Totmonslow Farm. The artefactual was exclusively mid-late twentieth century in date. There was no evidence that any of the areas of the site monitored during the watching brief were disturbed by past human activity prior to the construction of the recently demolished building and the laying out of its associated orchard and garden. It may be possible that shallow humps, noted in the adjacent field, represent the remains of the barrow that gave its name to the village. It appears that Little Totmonslow Farm lies outside the extent of the medieval village of Totmonslow.

9.0 ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The project was commissioned by Laurence Jay and thanks are due for his help and co-operation on site. Thanks also to Dave and John of D. R. Reaney, for their help during the fieldwork. Work on site was undertaken by Melissa Conway who also produced the written report. The illustrations were prepared by John Halsted. The project was monitored by Kirsty Nichol who also edited the report.

10.0 REFERENCES

- BUFAU 2002 *Replacement Dwelling at Little Totmonslow Farm, Draycott Road, Tean, Stoke-on-Trent.*
- Conway, M. 2002 *Little Totmonslow Farm, Tean, Stoke-on-Trent, Staffordshire: An Archaeological Desk-Based Assessment* BUFAU Report No. 928.
- Institute of Field Archaeologists (IFA) 1999 *Standards and Guidance for Archaeological Watching Briefs.*
- Palliser, D.M. 1976 *The Staffordshire Landscape* Hodder & Staughton, London.

Replacement Dwelling at Little Totmonslow Farm, Draycott Road, Tean, Stoke-on-Trent

Written Scheme of Investigation for an Archaeological Watching Brief

1.0 Introduction

This document outlines the programme of work required to undertake a watching brief at the above site. It forms a written scheme of investigation requested by the Development Services Department, Staffordshire County Council. Any variation in the scope of work would be agreed with Chris Wardle, Historic Environment Officer (Archaeology) for Staffordshire County Council, before implementation.

The work will be carried out during the excavation of trial holes to determine the foundation design.

2.0 Aims

The archaeological watching brief is intended 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 the significance of the archaeology of the site as a whole.

These aims will be achieved through a programme of archaeological monitoring visits to the site during all below-ground works.

3.0 The Site

The site of Little Totmonslow Farm, Tean, Stoke-on-Trent, Staffordshire is centred on NGR SJ 9926 3982, and lies within the parish of Draycott-in-the-Moors. A desk-based assessment of the site was undertaken by BUFAU in April 2002, the results of which identified the possibility of archaeological deposits dating from the prehistoric period onwards. There is strong place-name evidence to suggest the existence of a Bronze Age barrow in the vicinity of the village, otherwise there is relatively little known of the history of the area.

4.0 Archaeological Watching Brief

4.1: Aims

The aims of the archaeological watching brief will be

- to monitor all below-ground works
- to record the location, extent, date, character, condition, significance and quality of any surviving archaeological remains affected by the development works.

- to identify all previously unrecorded sites in order to update the SMR.
- to preserve all archaeological deposits 'by record', and conserve for long term conservation and future analysis all artefactual/ecofactual material recovered from the site.

4.2: Method

All ground works will be monitored and supervised by a suitably qualified archaeologist. Following the stripping of topsoil and modern overburden the sub-soil will be inspected for archaeological features and deposits. Spoil heaps will be examined and datable material recovered. Any archaeological deposits and features revealed during ground works will be excavated and recorded. All artefacts will be recovered and a programme of post-excavation analysis will be undertaken following the fieldwork.

5.0: Staffing

The fieldwork will be monitored for BUFAU by Kirsty Nichol (Assistant Project Manager, BUFAU).

Specialist staff will be, where appropriate:

Lynne Bevan - Flint artefacts and small finds.

Marina Ciaraldi - charred plant remains.

Richard Thomas - animal bone.

Dr James Greig - pollen and plant macro-fossils.

Dr David Smith - micro-fauna.

Dr Susan Limbrey - soils.

Dr Ann Woodward - Prehistoric ceramics.

Annette Hancocks - Romano-British ceramics.

Stephanie Ratkai - Medieval and Post-Medieval ceramics.

6.0: Report

The results of the archaeological fieldwork will be described in an illustrated report, which will contain the following:

- (a) Description of the archaeological background.
- (b) Method.
- (c) A narrative description of the results and discussion of the evidence, set in their local and regional context, supported by appropriate plans and sections. This will include a site location plan and any other maps relevant to the fieldwork.
- (d) Summary of the finds and environmental evidence.
- (e) Specialist assessments of the finds and environmental evidence.

Two copies of the report will be submitted to the Staffordshire Sites and Monuments Record, and two to the Local Planning Authority accompanied by a completed *Activity and Source Submission Form*. A summary of the work will be offered to West Midlands Archaeology and any other appropriate journal.

7.0: Archive

The site archive will be prepared according to guidelines set down in Appendix 3 of the Management of Archaeology Projects (English Heritage, 1991), the Guidelines for the Preparation of Excavation Archives for Long-term Storage (UKIC, 1990) and Standards in the Museum Care of Archaeological collections (Museum and Art Galleries Commission, 1992). It is intended that the archive will be deposited with an appropriate museum, such as the Potteries Museum and Art Gallery, Stoke-on-Trent, with the prior notification and agreement of the museum. The *Conditions for the Acceptance of Archaeological Material from Excavations and Fieldwork*, as stated by the museum, will be adhered to.

8.0: Health and Safety

All current legislation, regulations and guidance will be complied with.

9.0: Timetable

An archaeological watching brief will be maintained throughout below-ground works. Work is due to begin at the end of August-early September 2002.

10.0: General

BUFAU is a Registered Archaeological Organisation with the Institute of Field Archaeologists. All staff will adhere to the Code of Conduct of the Institute.

The project will follow the requirements set down in the Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Watching Briefs (Institute of Field Archaeologists 1994).

Any items suspected to be 'Treasure' will be reported in accordance with *The Treasure Act 1996*.

*Birmingham University Field Archaeology Unit
August 2002*

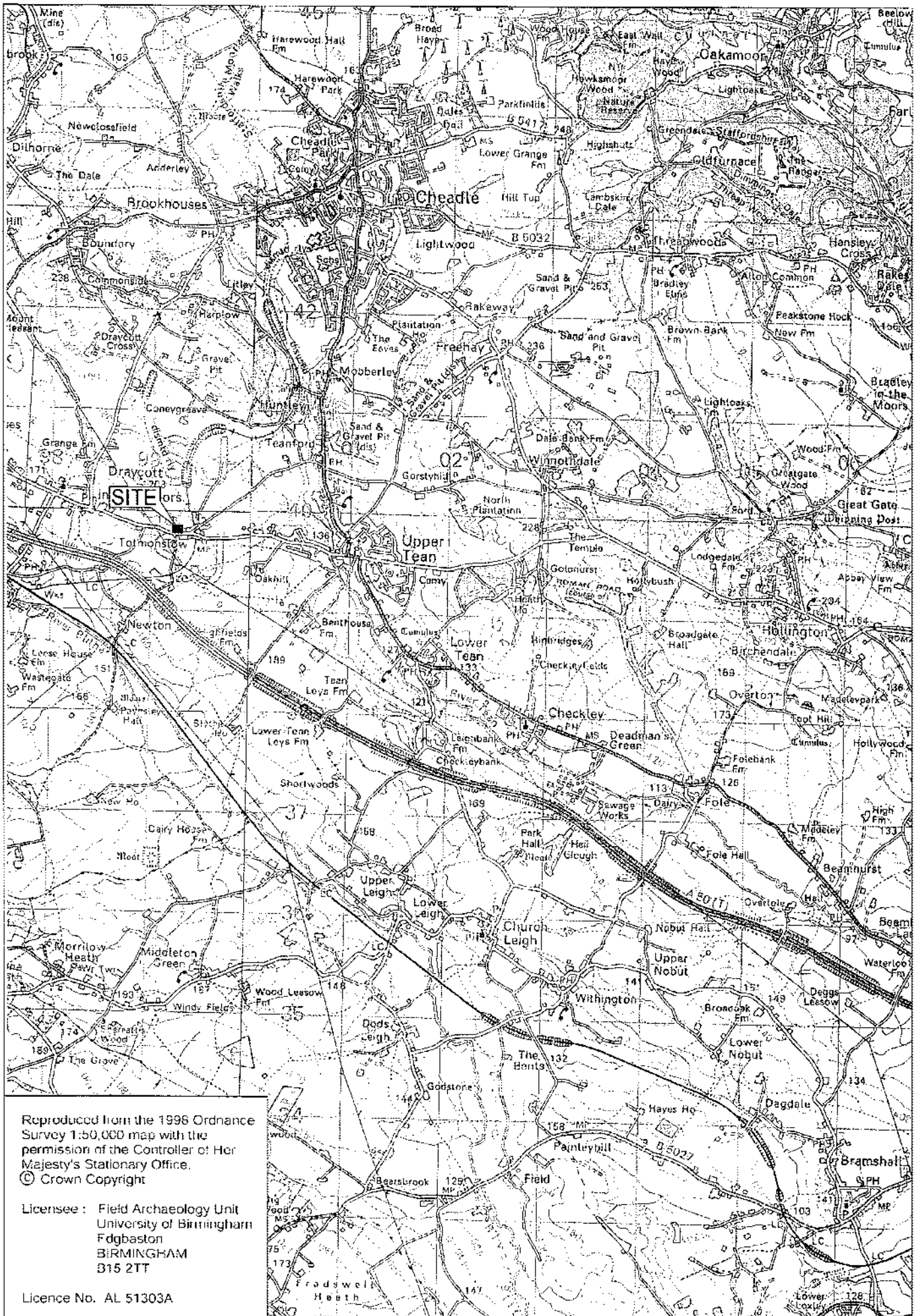


Figure 1

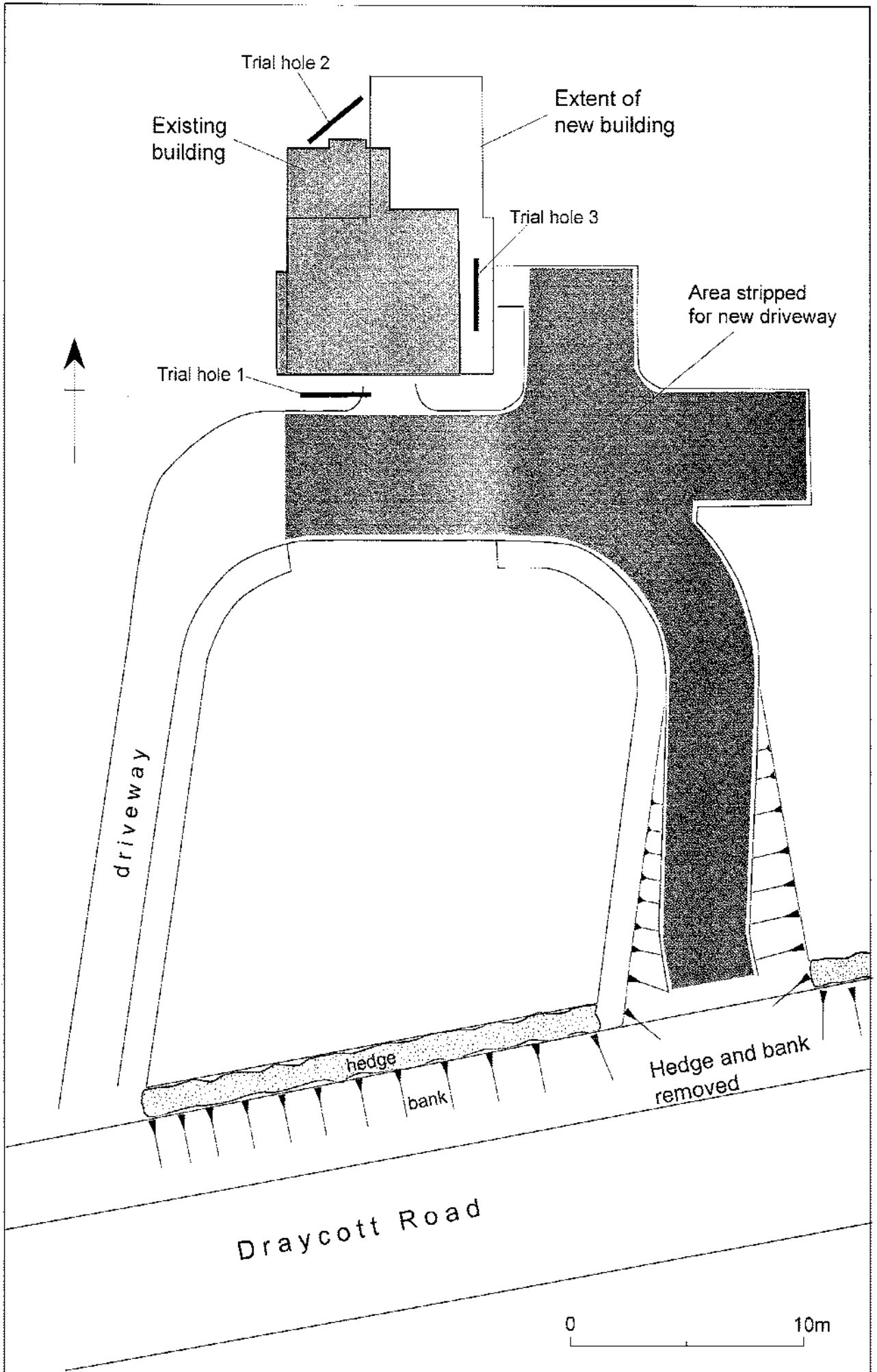


Figure 2



Plate 1

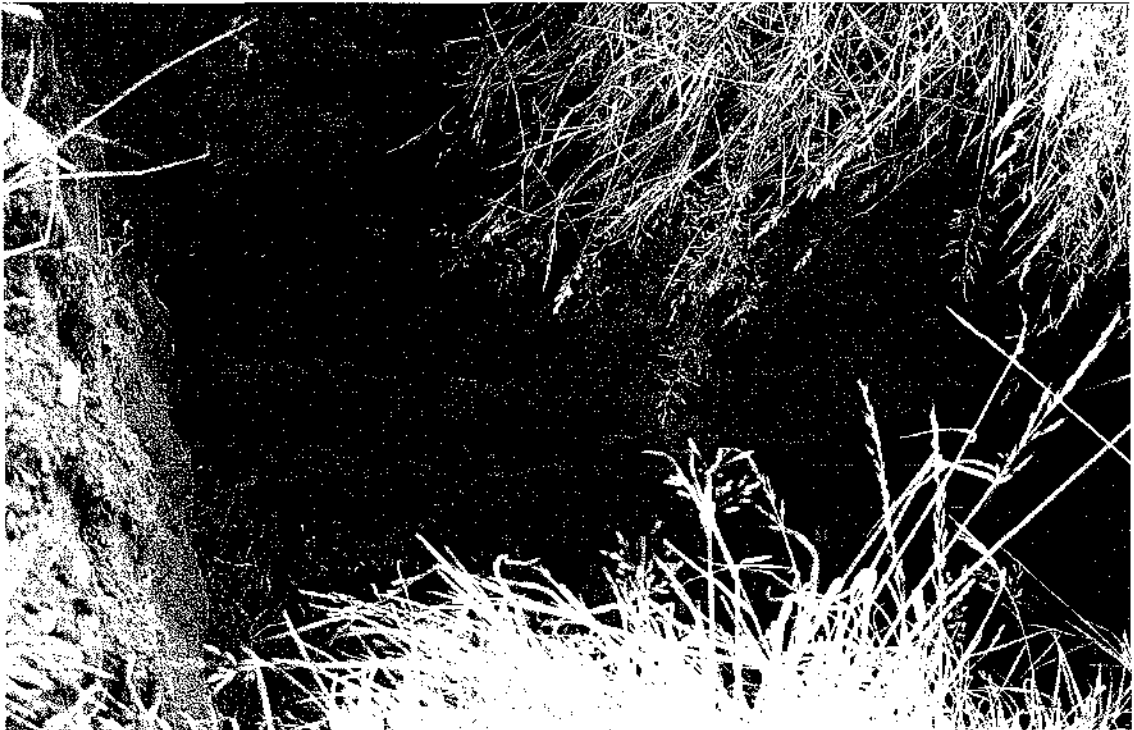


Plate 2

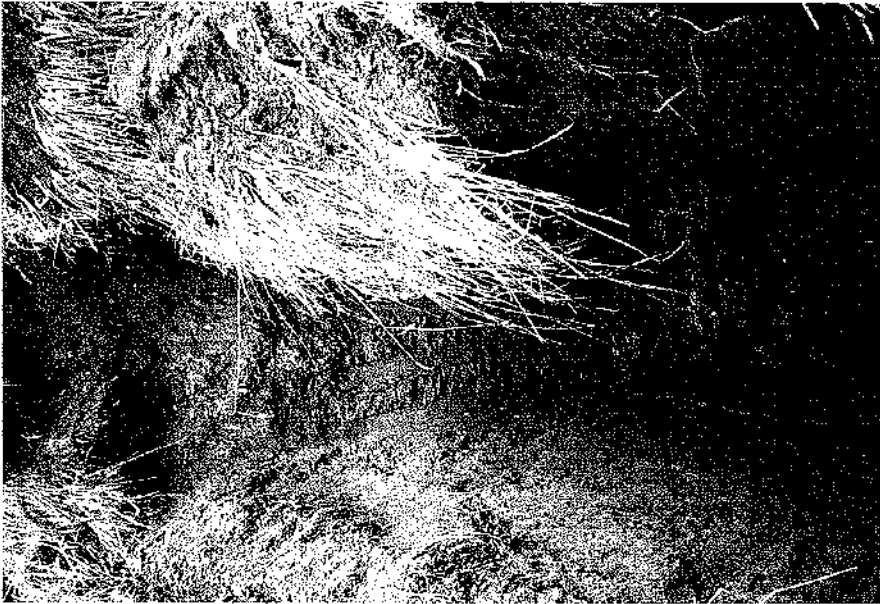


Plate 3

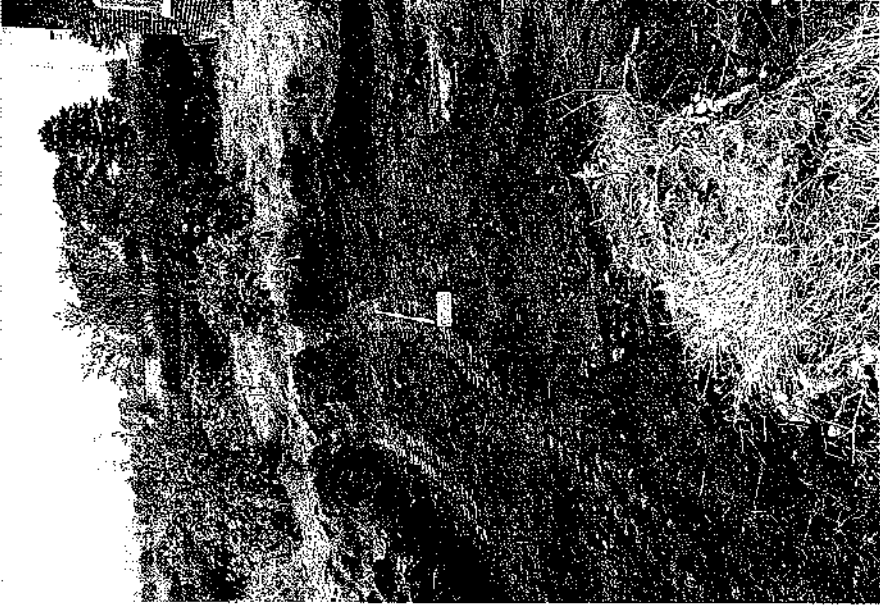


Plate 4

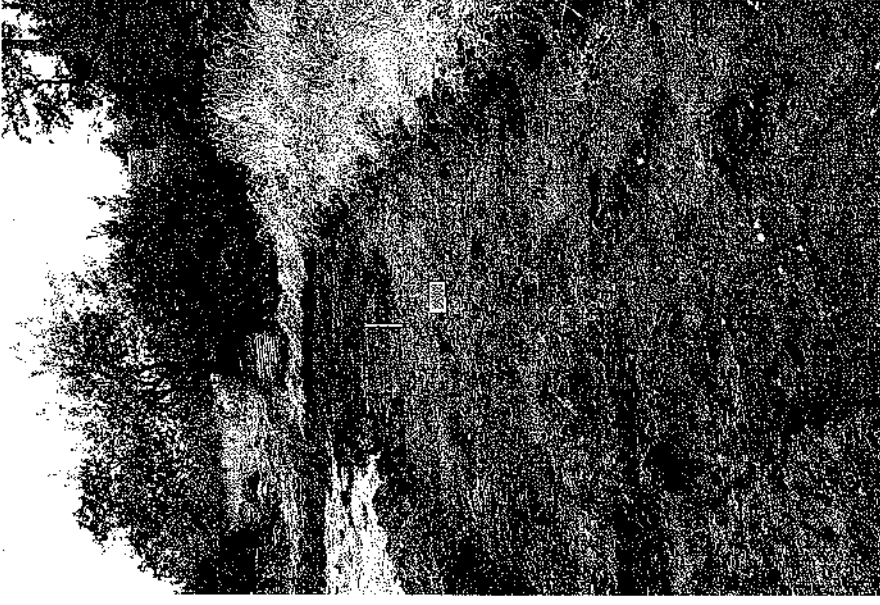


Plate 5