



THE UNIVERSITY
OF BIRMINGHAM

**Land adjacent to Tardebigge
Church of England School,
Church Lane, Tardebigge,
Bromsgrove, Worcestershire:**

an archaeological evaluation 2002

Birmingham University Field Archaeology Unit



Birmingham University Field Archaeology Unit
Project No. 1014
November 2002

**Land adjacent to Tardebigge Church of England School,
Church Lane, Tardebigge,
Bromsgrove, Worcestershire:
an archaeological evaluation 2002**

By

Richard H. Cherrington and Sarah Watt

with a contribution by Annette Hancocks

illustrations by Bryony Ryder

For further information please contact:
Simon Buteux, Iain Ferris or Alex Jones (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>

**Land adjacent to Tardebigge Church of England School, Church Lane,
Tardebigge, Bromsgrove, Worcestershire:
an archaeological evaluation 2002**

Contents

1.0	Summary	1
2.0	Introduction	1
3.0	Site location and description	2
4.0	Aims	2
5.0	Method	2
6.0	Sites and Monuments Record assessment	3
7.0	Summary of trial trenching results	5
8.0	The finds by Annette Hancocks	6
9.0	Discussion	6
10.0	Acknowledgements	6
11.0	Sources consulted	6
12.0	References	7

Tables (within text)

Table 1:	List of contexts	5
Table 2:	Finds quantification	6

List of Figures (at end of report)

Fig. 1: Location plan

Fig. 2: Site and trench location plan

Fig. 3: Location of SMR entries

Fig. 4: Tithe map, 1839

Fig. 5: 2nd edition OS map, 1904

Fig. 6: 3rd edition OS map, 1927

Fig. 7: Trench 1 north and west facing sections

Plates (at end of report)

Plate 1: Aerial photograph of Tardcbigge village looking northeast (SMR film ref. 27004)

Plate 2: Trench 1, looking east

Plate 3: Trench 1, looking south

**Land adjacent to Tardebigge Church of England School,
Church Lane, Tardebigge, Bromsgrove, Worcestershire:
an archaeological evaluation 2002**

Fieldwork Reference No. WSM 32074

1.0 Summary

An archaeological evaluation was undertaken at land adjacent to Tardebigge Church of England First School, Bromsgrove, Worcestershire (NGR SO 9948 6897). The evaluation was carried out during November 2002 by Birmingham University Field Archaeology Unit and was commissioned by Bolton Lomas Bradshaw Architects, on behalf of Tutnall and Cobley Parish Council, following a planning application for the proposed construction of a community hall. As the proposed development may have affected an archaeological site registered on the County Sites and Monuments Record (reference WSM 05694), further information on the archaeological site was required before a decision on planning permission could be made. The first stage of the evaluation was a Sites and Monuments Register assessment, which indicated potential for the survival of remains relating to a shrunken medieval village within the site. Although no such remains were known to exist within the site itself features of probable medieval date including ridge and furrow, a possible house platform and a holloway, were present in the immediate vicinity of the site. A row of three buildings depicted within the site, on Ordnance Survey maps of 1888 and later, were also noted. A single archaeological trial trench was excavated which revealed evidence of 19th century disturbance, probably relating to the structures depicted on Ordnance Survey maps of 1888 and later. No evidence of medieval activity was recorded within the site during the trial trenching. No deposits or features of archaeological significance were identified and the only artefacts recovered were of 19-20th century date.

2.0 Introduction

This report describes the results of an archaeological evaluation, by means of trial-trenching, carried out by Birmingham University Field Archaeology Unit (BUFAU), of land at Tardebigge Church of England First School, Bromsgrove, Worcestershire (Fig. 1, hereafter referred to as the site). A planning application was submitted to Bromsgrove District Council by Tutnall and Cobley Parish Council (Planning Application Ref: B/01/1045) for the proposed construction of a community hall and associated works on the land. As the proposed development may have affected an archaeological site registered on the County Sites and Monuments Record (reference WSM 05694), further information on the archaeological site was required before a decision on planning permission could be made. It is the purpose of the evaluation to provide this information. The requirements for the evaluation are set out in the County Council's brief (*Brief for an archaeological field evaluation at land adjacent to Tardebigge C. of E. School, Church Lane, Tardebigge, Bromsgrove, Worcestershire*, Planning Advisory Section, Worcestershire Archaeological Service, 17 October 2002). The work conforms to a brief prepared by BUFAU (BUFAU 2002) and follows the standards and guidance published by the Institute of Field Archaeologists (IFA 2001).

3.0 Site location and description (Figs. 1 and 2)

The site is situated adjacent to Tardebigge C. of E. School, Church Lane, Tardebigge, Bromsgrove, Worcestershire (NGR SO 9948 6897). The site covers approx. 850m² and is currently used for agricultural purposes (pasture).

4.0 Aims

The aims of the archaeological evaluation are to:

- establish the likely presence or absence of any archaeological deposits and features within the proposed development site.
- define the nature, extent and significance of surviving deposits and features.
- provide information to allow a mitigation strategy to be designed.

These aims were achieved through a SMR assessment, archaeological trial trenching and metal detector survey.

5.0 Method

5.1 Sites and Monuments Record assessment

Worcestershire County Sites and Monuments Record (SMR) was consulted for information on known archaeological sites or features recorded in the vicinity of the site. Aerial photographs held at the SMR were also consulted. Tithe and Ordnance Survey maps held at Worcestershire County Record Office were examined.

5.2 Trial trenching

The location and layout of evaluation trench was determined in consultation with the Planning Advisory Section of Worcestershire Archaeological Service. The extent of the trenching represented approximately 5% of the total area of the site. It was proposed that two 15m x 1.6m trenches would be excavated. Due to health and safety concerns and obstacles on the ground, the two proposed trench locations had to be moved from their intended positions and modified to form a single 'L' -shaped trench with a combined length (N-S and E-W arms) of 30m x 1.6m wide and 0.35-0.90m deep.

Overburden was removed by a JCB excavator fitted with a toothless ditching bucket. This was monitored by a qualified archaeologist at all times. Spoil and exposed surfaces were scanned with a metal detector and all non-modern finds were to be recorded. Where appropriate, surfaces and sections were hand cleaned to aid interpretation and recording. A detailed context record on individual pro-forma record cards was maintained and all deposits were photographed using both colour and monochrome film, supplemented by digital images. Sections and plans were drawn at a scale of 1:50 or 1:20 as appropriate. Where no archaeological deposits were identified, a record of the stratigraphy was made. These records, together with the finds constitute the site archive, which is stored at Birmingham University Field Archaeology Unit at the time of writing. The archive will be deposited with the relevant museum within a reasonable time following completion of the project, subject to the agreement of the landowner.

6.0 Sites and Monuments Record assessment

6.1 Archaeological and historical context (Fig. 3)

As stated in the Brief prepared by the Planning Advisory Section of the Worcestershire County Archaeological Service, there has been little direct archaeological investigation of the settlement of Tardebigge. A watching brief (WSM23774) was carried out in 1996 (Topping 1996) during the excavation of a gas pipe trench at St. Bartholomew's Church, just to the north of the development site. The particular aim of the watching brief was to identify material relating to the former medieval church (WSM01891), the exact location of which is unclear. No such material was revealed, although the remains of a largely robbed out wall line and a brick-lined vault of probable 19th century date were recorded (Topping 1996). A site visit to the church was made in 1989 (Shelley 1989) following the discovery of vaulted chambers during restoration works within the building. One of the vaults contained gravestones, one of which was dated 1691.

The placename Tardebigge apparently derives from the Anglo-Saxon *Tyrde Biggan*, meaning 'Big Tower' or 'Tower on a Hill' (Harris 1977), possibly being a reference to a church. The present church does indeed stand on a small hill. The medieval church was demolished after its tower fell and damaged the rest of the building in 1774. The new church (WSM01892) was built in 1777, and lay to the north of its medieval predecessor. The medieval church was supposed to have been built soon after the Conquest, and was certainly in existence by 1138, as it then formed part of the endowment of the Cistercian Abbey of Bordesley (Page 1913). Some of its stonework was used in the construction of the new church, which was designed by Frances Hiome. The medieval church, according to Nash (1799) had stood half in Worcestershire and half in Warwickshire – when the new church was built to the north of the old, it was constructed wholly in Worcestershire. The line of the county boundary is shown on the early Ordnance Survey maps and, although the exact location of the medieval church is not known, it is possible (although dependent on any movement of the county boundary lines during the last two centuries) that part of it may fall within the proposed development site.

Medieval ridge and furrow has been identified to the west and northwest of the site (WSM3313 to WSM3316), and house platforms and a possible holloway have been identified to the south of the church (WSM05694), suggesting that remains of a shrunken medieval settlement may lie in this area. Some of the ridge and furrow (WSM3313, 3315 and 3316) can be seen on an aerial photograph of the area held at the County SMR (Film ref. R27004; Plate 1). The holloway is more difficult to identify, but there is a slight linear dip observable on the photograph, which may represent this.

Other sites listed on the SMR within the vicinity of the development site, include the Vicarage (WSM01700), an early 19th century building, a medieval cross in the churchyard (WSM01893), and various sites related to the Worcester and Birmingham canal to the north, including Church Quarry (WSM26322), stone from which was used in the rebuilding of the church in 1777 and in the construction of the canal in 1810-13, a quarry tramway (WSM26321), which was abandoned in 1815, and the remains of a 19th century experimental boat lift in the garden of Top Lock Cottage (WSM27823).

6.2 Cartographic evidence

Tardebigge Tithe map - 1839 (Fig. 4)

The field pattern on this map, within the vicinity of the site, can still be recognised to some extent on the modern map. The area of the site was contained within one of a series of enclosures extending to High House Lane, which ran, as it does now, northeast-southwest to the south of St. Bartholomew's Church. The church (WSM01892) and its churchyard stood, as now, to the north of the study area. A boundary line is shown to pass through the site, running northwest from High House Lane before turning west by the church (along the line of an existing path shown on the modern map) and then southwest to Stone House through a large field. This probably represents the county boundary between Worcestershire and Warwickshire. It is possible that the boundary ran, deliberately or otherwise, along the line of the holloway (WSM05694) mentioned above.

The field in which the study area is situated was pasture land named *Part of Close*, owned by Robert Henry Clive and occupied by the Reverend and Honourable Walter, Lord Aston. The field to the west was named *Close*, also pasture. The field to the east was occupied by the vicarage and the close associated with it. The village of Tardebigge, as shown on this map, appears to have been widely dispersed: the church of St. Bartholomew and the vicarage formed the focus of the settlement, surrounded by enclosures of varying size. Dispersed around it were several larger houses – Dial House to the northwest, Stone House and High House to the southwest, and New House and Holyoake's Farm to the southeast. At this date, there appears to have been no roadside settlement along High House Lane, which would seem to have been the obvious place for nucleated settlement, by the church and surrounded by the field system.

First Edition Ordnance Survey 6 inch – 1888 (not illustrated)

The county boundary is shown to cross through the middle of the site. The site itself lay within part of two enclosures, its northern end within the enclosure adjacent to the graveyard, just outside the Vicarage enclosure. The rest of the site lay within a larger enclosure to the south. The school was in existence, although the building was smaller at that time than the present extended building. There was also a row of three small buildings along and outside the school's southern enclosure boundary, within the area of the site. The only other features visible within the site are trees along and to the west of the county boundary. Immediately to the northeast of the church, the site of an old quarry is marked. Further to the north is the Worcester to Birmingham canal and an area of lime kilns and wharfs.

Second Edition Ordnance Survey 25 inch – 1904 (Fig. 4)

This map is more detailed than the first edition. It in fact shows the site to have been part of various enclosures. The northernmost area is shown to be within the school's enclosure. The southwestern area is included in part of the large field that extends to High House Lane, and also covers a smaller sub-enclosure of this field which backs on to one of the row of three buildings to the south of the school. A further small building lies to their west. A dashed line demarcates another irregular area in the southeastern part of the site, which contained trees. The county boundary also passed through this area. In fields to the south, oak trees are marked along the line of the boundary; the trees shown in the dashed-line enclosure mentioned above may also have been planted as boundary markers. The pattern of the fields and enclosures around the site at this time was broadly similar to that existing today.

Third Edition Ordnance Survey 25 inch – 1927 (Fig. 5)

The only observable changes since 1904 appears to have been the removal of the field boundary which now forms the southwestern edge of the site, the removal of the yard enclosure at the back of the row of three buildings, and the reduction in size, and change in shape, of the dashed-line enclosure containing trees. This is shown here to have solid boundaries and to have contained a single tree.

6.3 Conclusion

From the available evidence there would appear to be potential for the survival of remains relating to a shrunken medieval village. Features probably dating to the medieval period including a possible house platform and holloway, exist within the immediate vicinity of the site. Remains of three post-medieval buildings, probably dating to the 19th century, may also exist on the site.

7.0 Summary of trial trenching results (Fig. 7, Plates 2 and 3)

The natural subsoil (1004) was encountered at a depth of 0.35-0.90m below the present ground surface. This was overlain by a layer of dark brown loam (1001), 0.10-0.45m deep. Layer 1001 was truncated by modern field drains. Overlying layer 1001, at the middle of the trench, was a deposit of dark brown sandy loam with ash lenses (1002) containing 19th century demolition debris, 0.55m deep. Sealing layer 1001 further to the east was a pale brown silty loam (1003) containing post-medieval tile fragments, 0.75m deep. A layer of brown sandy loam (1005) with 19th century brick and tile inclusions, 0.3m deep, overlay layers 1003, 1002 and 1001. Sealing these contexts was a topsoil (1000) comprising of a dark brown sandy loam, 0.10-0.45m deep, containing post-medieval pottery. Spoil and exposed surfaces were scanned with a metal detector and only modern finds were located.

Table 1: list of contexts

Context Number	Context Description	Thickness	Context type
1000	Very dark brown, humic sandy loam (topsoil)	0.10-0.45m	Layer
1001	Dark brown loam	0.45m	Layer
1002	Dark brown/black sandy loam with 19 th century demolition material	0.55m	Layer
1003	Pale brown clayey silty loam	0.75m	Layer
1004	Mixed pink/orange and grey clays with occasional pebbles	n/a 0.35-0.90m below modern surface	Natural subsoil
1005	Brown sandy loam with 19 th century brick and tile inclusions	0.30m	Layer

8.0 The finds by Annette Hancocks

All of the pottery recovered derives from the topsoil 1000. Sherds identified included a single rim of a bowl in stoneware (WAS, Fabric 81), a press moulded creamware rim

sherd (Fabric 84), three sherds of tin glazed ware (WAS, Fabric 82) and four miscellaneous post-medieval wares (WAS, Fabric 100). All appear to be of 19th-20th century date.

Table 2: finds quantification

Context	Post-medieval pottery	Ceramic: tile	Spot date
1000	9 (427g)	-	19 th /20 th century
1003	-	3(126g)	post-medieval

9.0 Discussion

The SMR assessment identified the former position of a row of three small structures, depicted on Ordnance Survey maps of 1888, 1904 (Fig. 5) and 1927 (Fig. 6). Evidence of the demolition of these buildings is probably represented by layers 1002, 1003 and 1005. The map evidence and the finds recovered during the evaluation suggest these structures are of 19th century date. Undated loam layer 1001 may possibly be an earlier ploughsoil. The pottery is probably residual refuse, derived from the former 19th century buildings, incorporated into the topsoil. No deposits or artefacts of archaeological significance were recorded during the evaluation. There is, however, potential for the survival of substantial medieval remains outside of the proposed development area.

10.0 Acknowledgements

Richard Cherrington wrote this report and supervised the evaluation fieldwork, which was carried out with the assistance of Melissa Conway. Annette Hancocks reported on the pottery and the illustrations were prepared by Bryony Ryder. The project was managed and the report was edited by Laurence Jones. The project was monitored by Mike Glyde, Planning Archaeologist, Planning Advisory Section, Worcestershire Archaeological Service, Worcester County Council.

11.0 Sources consulted (SMR assessment)

Maps

Tardebigge Tithe Map, 1839

First Edition Ordnance Survey map (6 inch), 1888

Second Edition Ordnance Survey map (25 inch), Sheet 23.2, 1904

Third Edition Ordnance Survey map (25 inch), Sheet 23.2, 1927

Aerial photograph

Black-and-white oblique – 19/4/1990 Ref. R27004, SO996 693 (held at Worcestershire County SMR).

SMR Card:

Shelley, D. 1989 Site Visit

12.0 References

BUFAU, 2002 *Land adjacent to Tardebigge C. of E. School, Church Lane, Tardebigge, Bromsgrove, Worcestershire: Method Statement for an Archaeological Evaluation*

Harris, R.D. 1977 *A Short History of St. Bartholomew's Church, Tardebigge*. Russell Printers (Worcester) Ltd.

Institute of Field Archaeologists, 2001 *Standards and Guidance for Archaeological Field Evaluation*

Nash, T. 1799 (1984) *Collections for the History of Worcestershire*. K. Tomkinson, Kidderminster

Page, W. 1913 *A History of the County of Worcester, VCH Volume III*. Dawsons of Pall Mall for the University of London

Topping, J. 1996 *Watching Brief at St Bartholomew's Church, Tardebigge, Tutnall and Copley (HWCM 23774)*. Hereford and Worcester County Archaeological Service Report 433

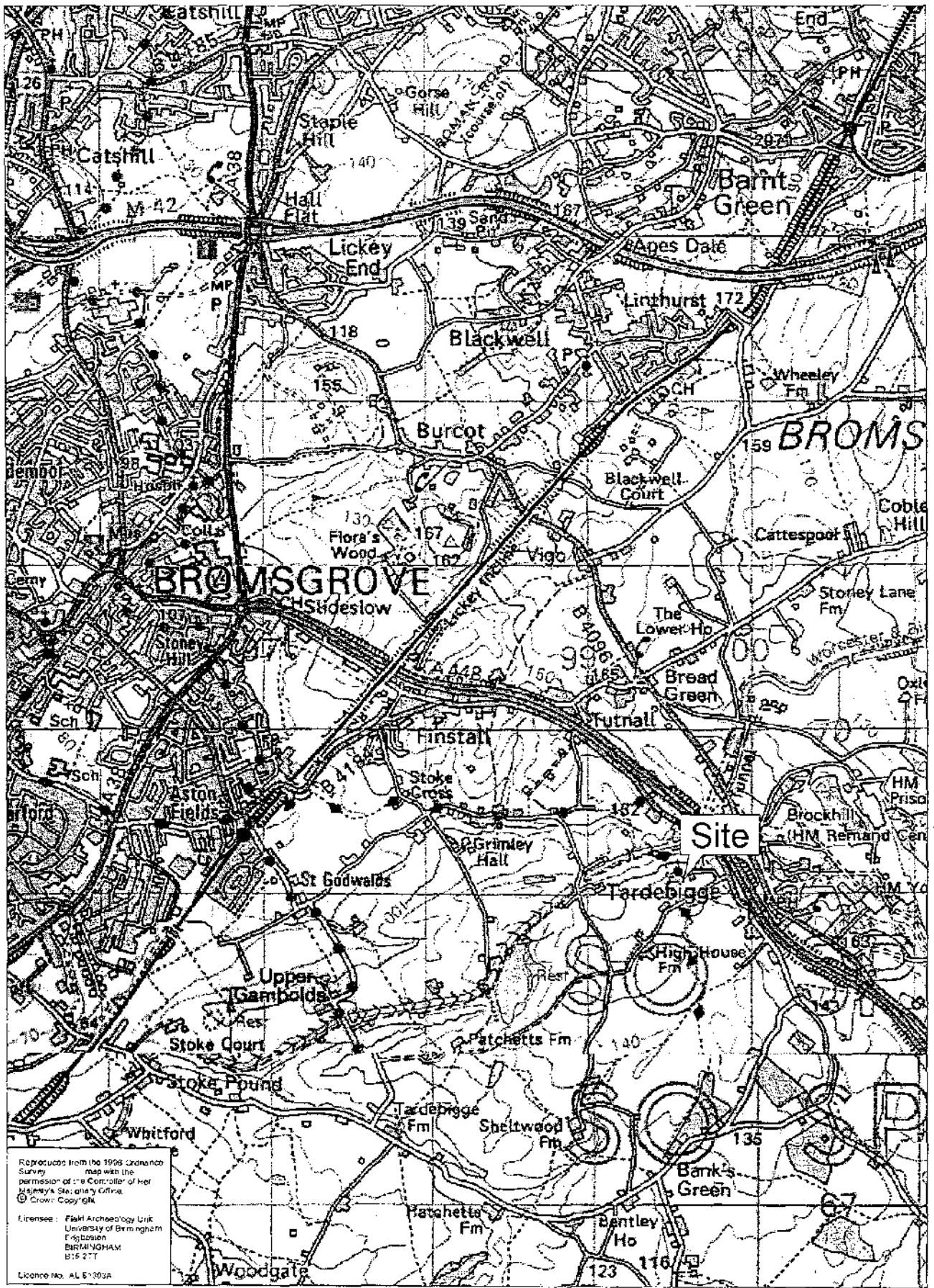


Fig.1

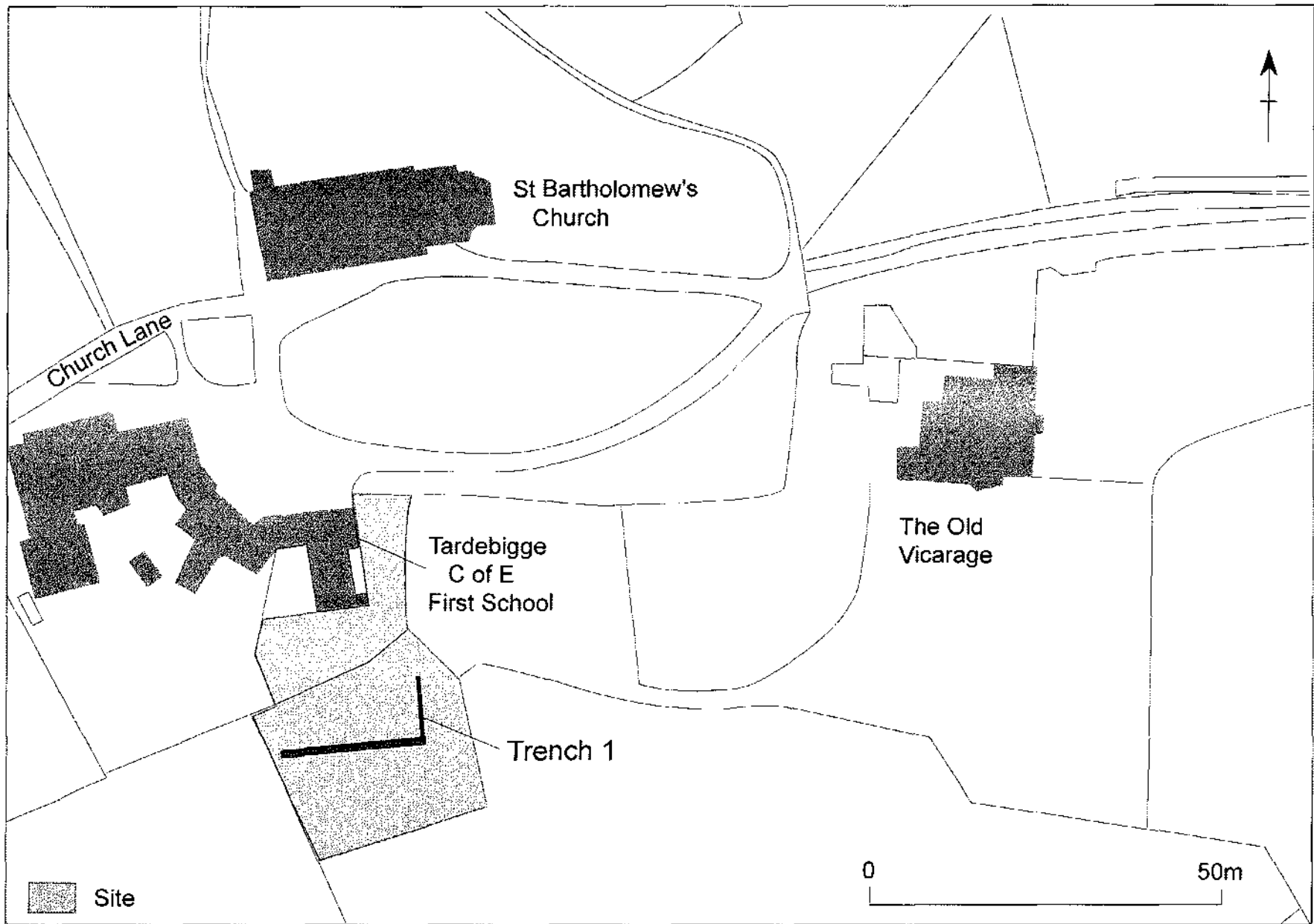


Fig.2

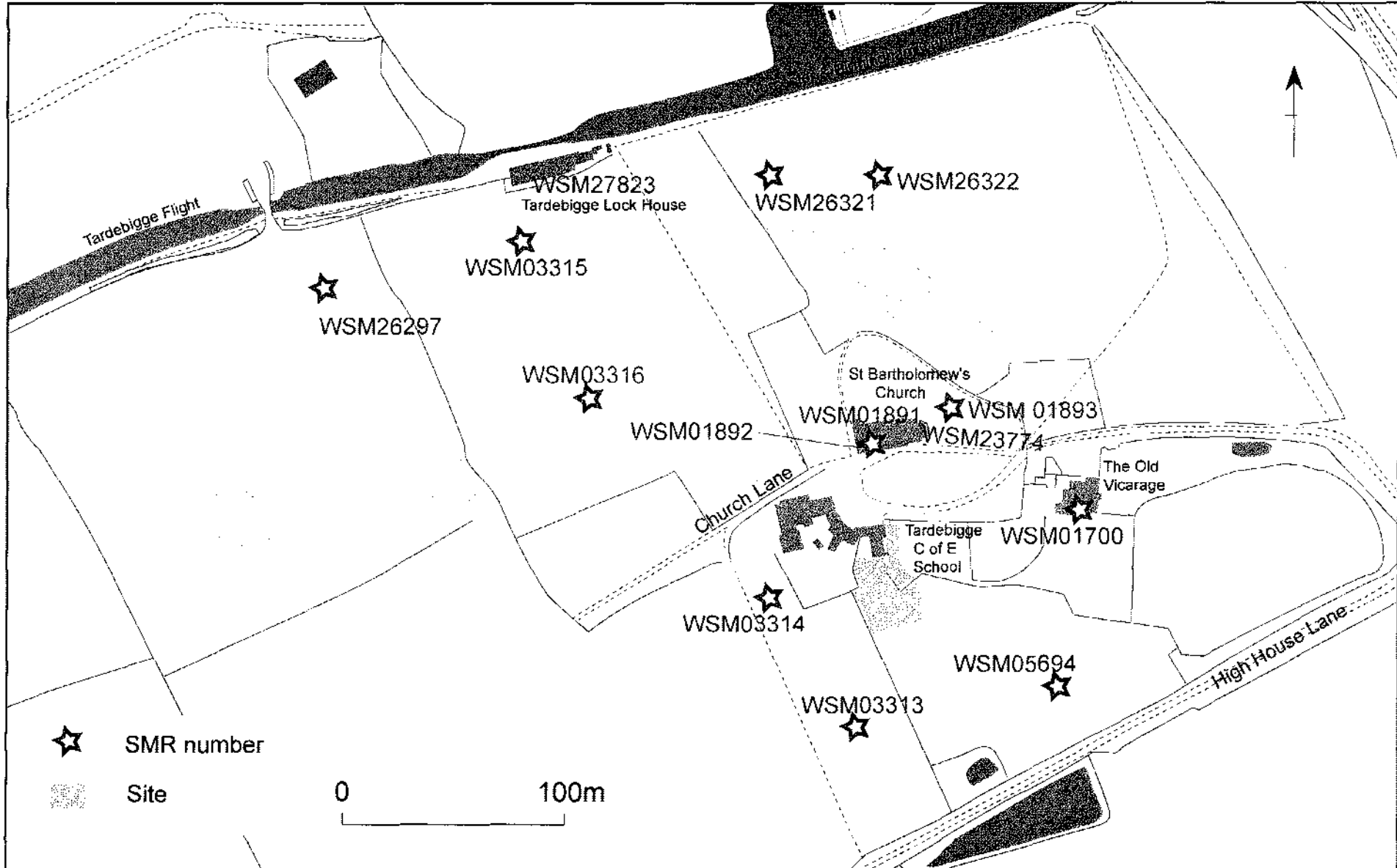


Fig.3

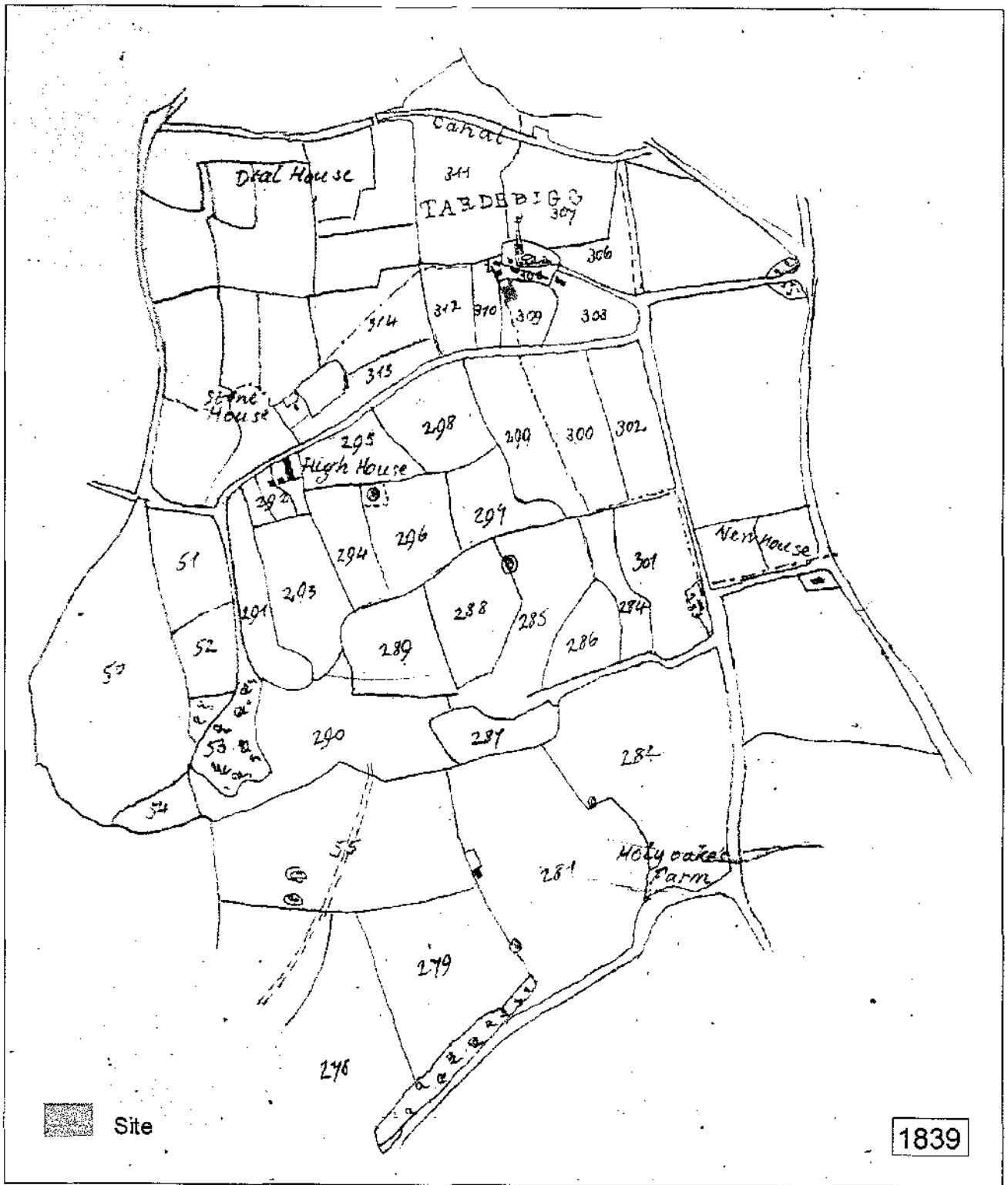


Fig.4

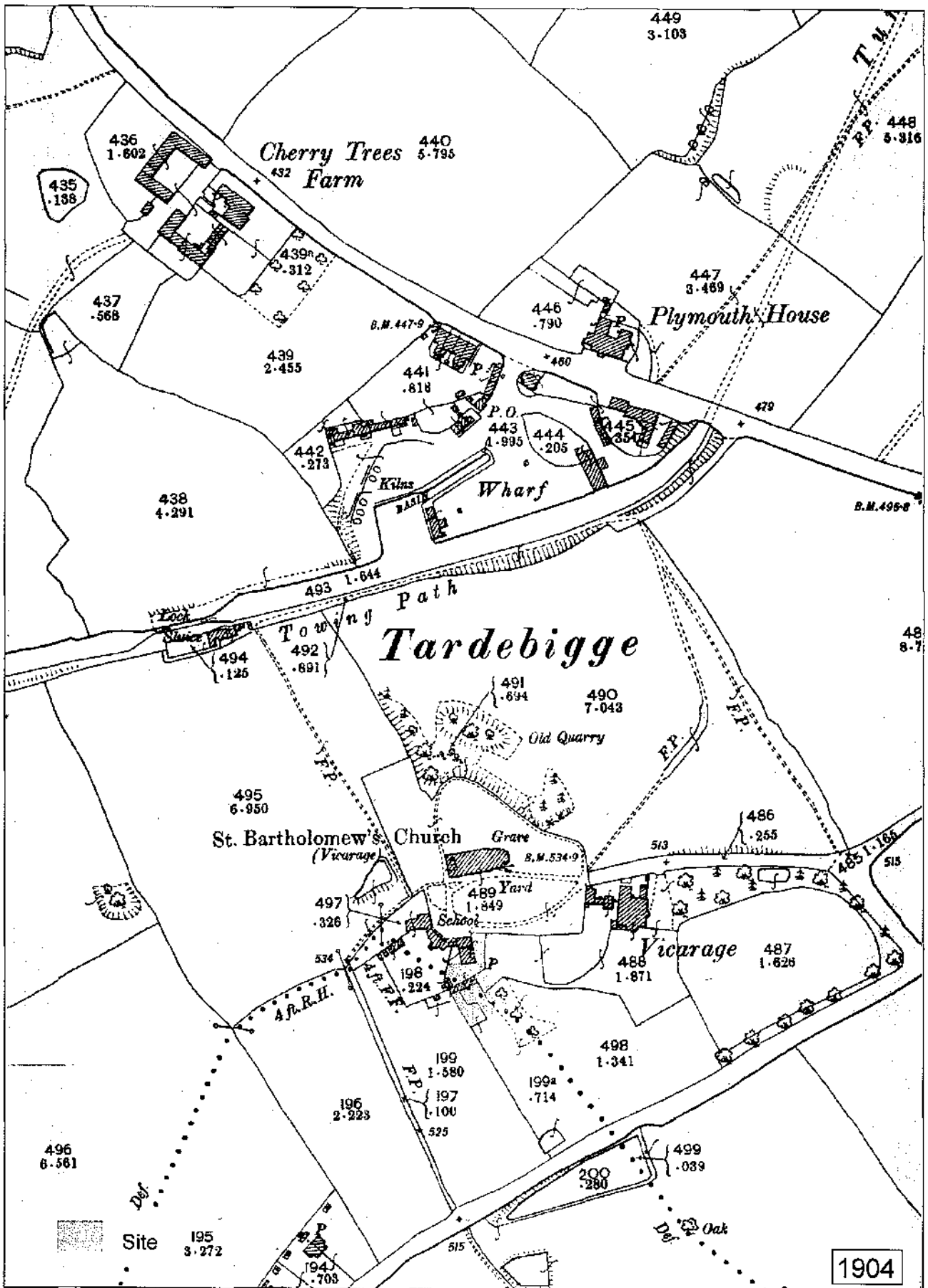


Fig.5

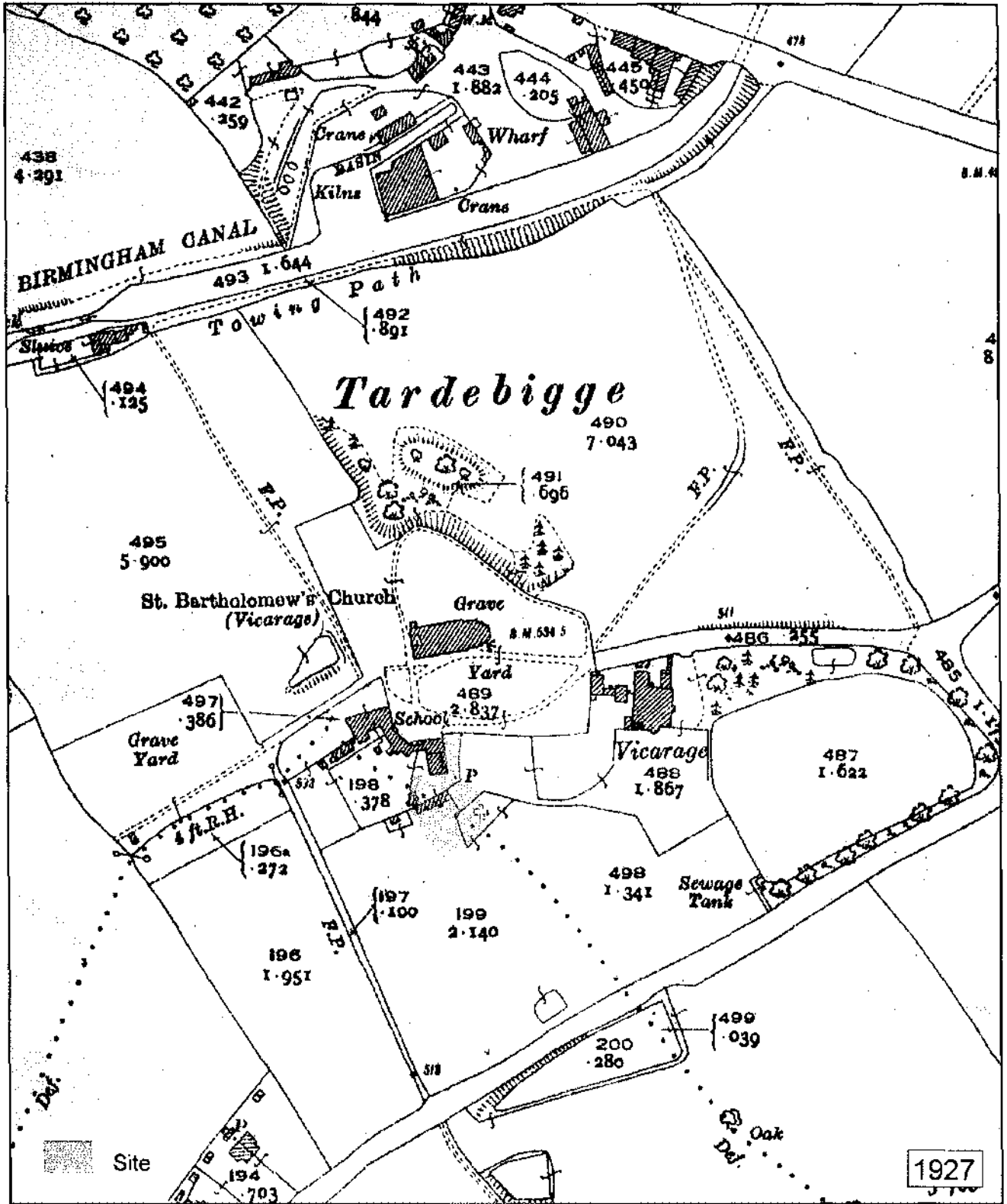
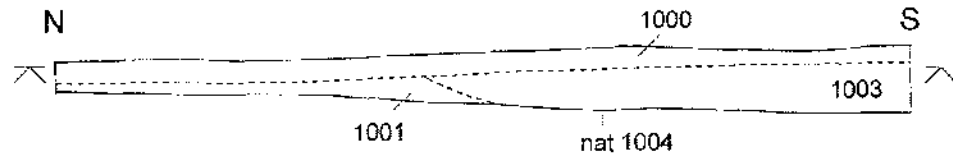


Fig.6

North-south arm, west facing section



East-west arm, north facing section

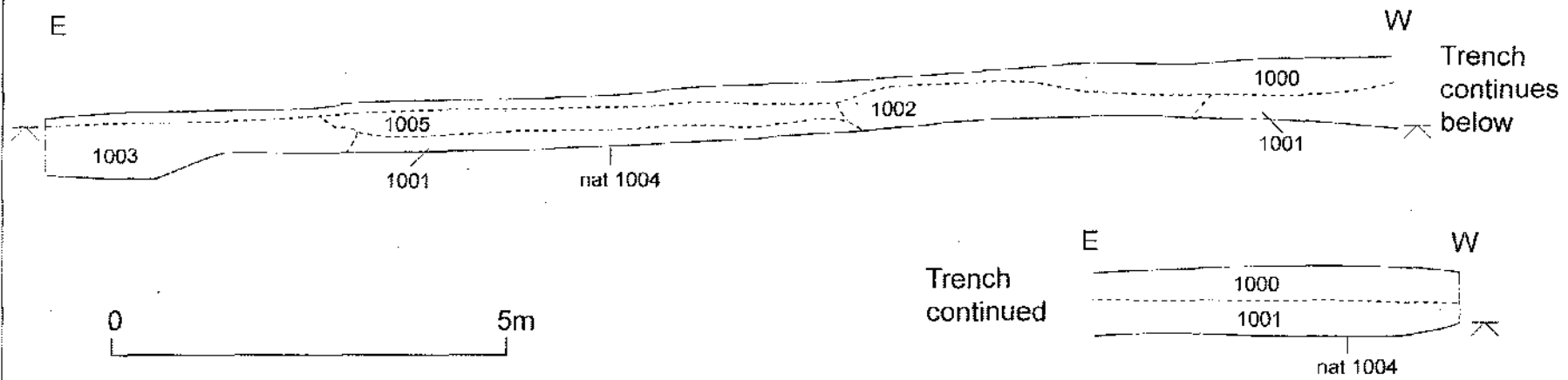


Fig.7



Plate 1



Plate 2



Plate 3