Himley Hall, Himley, Staffordshire

Archaeological Watching Brief
March 2003

Birmingham University Field Archaeology Unit
Project No. 1033
March 2003

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by
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Himley Hall, Himley, Staffordshire (SMR 09209)
Archaeological Watching Brief 2003

Summary

A watching brief was carried out at Himley Hall, Himley, Staffordshire (NGR SO 8883 9156) in January and February 2003 by Birmingham University Field Archaeology Unit (BUFAU) on behalf of Charnock and Slater Limited for Dudley Metropolitan Borough Council during groundworks for the replacement of a sewage pumping station, the laying of cabling for lighting and the installation of an IT network. The site was considered to have high archaeological potential due to Himley Hall's location on the site of a former medieval moated manor house. The Hall itself is also of historical significance, as are the gardens which were laid out by Capability Brown. It was therefore considered likely that phases of demolition and building associated with the hall and phases of landscaping associated with the park, might be encountered during the groundworks. Trenches excavated in front of the east facing elevation of the Hall revealed the existence of three sandstone walls and a cobbled surface which may have been associated with the original medieval manor house. Two brick walls, also located in the trench in front of the east facing elevation of the southern wing of the hall, may have been contemporary with the first phase of building of the current hall in the 18th century. An interconnected system of drains and culverts were probably part of the 19th century redesign of the hall. Trenches to the south and east of the hall revealed evidence of hard landscaping for the lay out of the surrounding parkland.

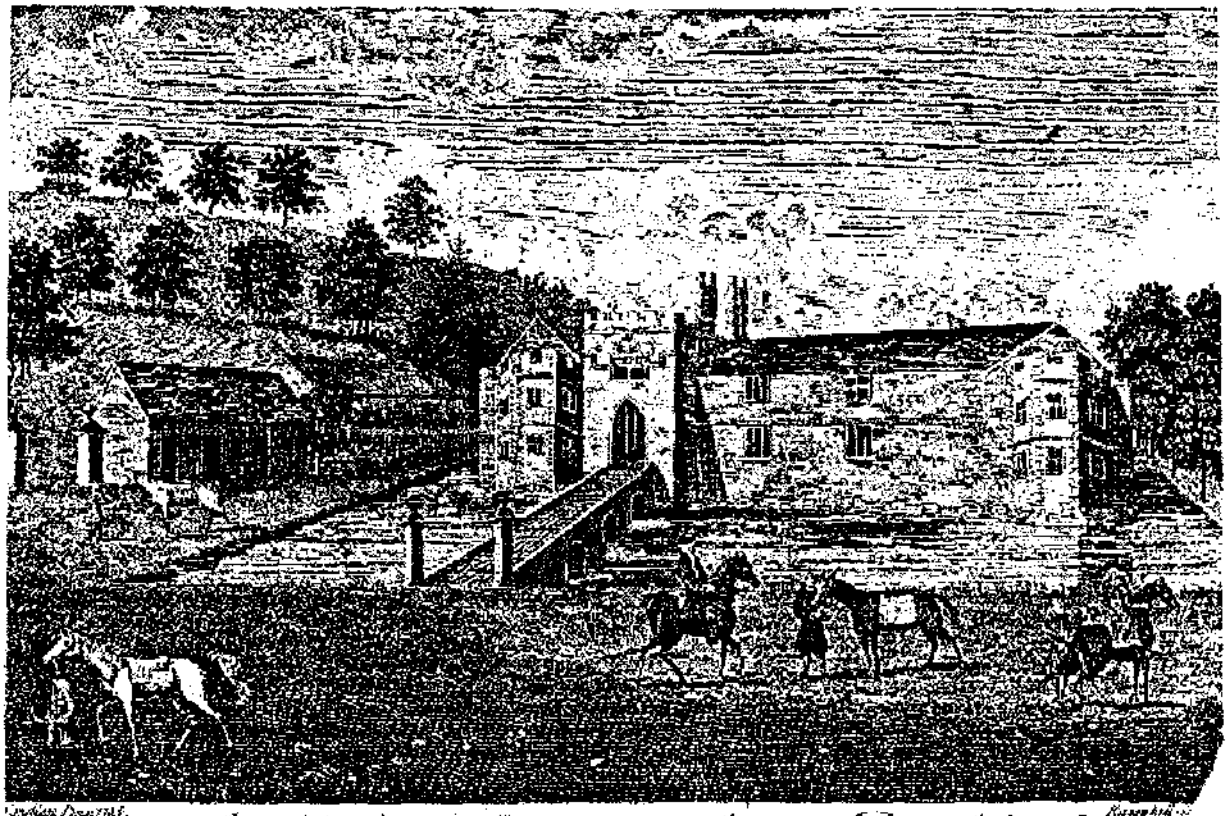
1.0 Introduction

A watching brief was undertaken by Birmingham University Field Archaeology Unit on behalf of Charnock and Slater Limited, at Himley Hall, Himley, Staffordshire (NGR SO 8883 9156, Fig. 1) in January and February 2003, during groundworks for the replacement of a sewage pumping station and the laying of electrical and IT cabling. The site is archaeologically sensitive, and the watching brief was carried out in accordance with a written scheme of investigation (BUFAU 2003) which ensured that the requirements of the Local Planning Authority were fulfilled.

2.0 Background

Himley Hall (Plate 1) is believed to occupy the site of a former medieval moated manor house (SMR 01149). An etching by Stebbing Shaw (Plate 2), dating to around 1735, depicts a large house occupying the platform, rising directly from the moat, with a wide water filled moat on three sides at least. The house is shown as having a westerly aspect and was reached by a permanent brick or stone bridge across the moat. The manor house, and the Barony of Birmingham, was inherited in 1740 by John Ward of Sedgley. He

Plate 1



To the Right Hon.ble
this View of the old House
is most obliged by his

Viscount Dudley & Ward,
at Himley &c &c
obliged humble Servt

Plate 2

demolished the house and backfilled the moat, constructing a new palladio style residence on the site (SMR 09209). Ward was also reponsible for moving the village of Himley, which was originally located immediately to the west of the house. The village was moved much further west to be located outside the park, and the houses and church were levelled (pers. comm. Hemmingway). Today Himley Hall is a grade 2* listed building (LB 05/059), set in extensive parkland, which may originally have been landscaped by Nathaniel Richmond, with later developments made by Lancelot 'Capability' Brown (UK Database of Historic Parks and Gardens).

Previous archaeological work on the site includes small scale excavation carried out by John Hemmingway, during which iron slag was recovered (pers. comm. Hemmingway). It is possible that the slag dates to the occupation of the site by Dud Dudley in the 1630s when he was experimenting with smelting iron ore in a furnace.

3.0 Aims

The overall objective of the archaeological work was to record all surviving archaeological deposits and finds disturbed or exposed by the excavation of the service trenches.

The more specific objectives of the archaeological watching brief were to identify any potential archaeology and to fully record such deposits. Specific research areas were to identify

- the location of the moat.
- the original course of the stream, to the southeast of the house, which may have originally been a feeder or leat associated with the moat and which presently shows signs of being canalised as part of the landscaping of the park.
- the level of the original ground surface and the degree to which it has been hard landscaped; which areas have been built up or scarped down.
- the style and extent of structures which abutted the eastern elevations of the north and south wings, for which there is only scant evidence visible in the facade of the building.
- other, no longer extant, garden features.

4.0 Methodology

A series of visits was made to inspect all open service trenches prior to their backfilling. All stratigraphic sequences were recorded, even where no archaeology was present. Features were planned at a scale of 1:20, and sections were drawn through all cut features and significant vertical stratigraphy at a scale of 1:10. A comprehensive written record was maintained using a continuous numbered context system on *pro forma* context cards. Written records and scale plans were supplemented by photographs, using monochrome

and colour print and colour slide photography. These records comprise part of the site archive.

5.0 Results (Fig. 2)

5.1 Trench 1

Trench 1, which measured approximately 0.6m in width by 2.5m in length and 0.8m in depth, was orientated roughly east to west and located near to the northeastern corner of the east facing elevation of the northern wing of the hall.

Projecting from beneath the north facing section of the trench a 19th century drain, consisting of a brick-built feature (F100), measuring approximately 0.25m in height and 0.4m in width, was partially exposed in plan. Feature F100 was constructed from red bricks and capped with a sandstone slab which covered a square, brick built shaft, approximately 0.15m in width, which reached a depth of at least 0.85m (though its full depth could was not revealed during excavation). In the east facing section of Trench 1 part of a north to south aligned brick wall (F101) was encountered. Wall F101, which was constructed of red brick (3" width x 8" length), was five courses high and capped by a paving slab. The bricks were regular and well made but the mortar had been applied thickly and unevenly. Features F100 and wall F101 had been sealed by a deposit of red silty sand (1003) with charcoal flecks, brick and tile fragments and lumps of mortar. Overlying layer 1003 was a thin band of mortar and pebbles (1002) which had, in turn, been sealed by a deposit of sand, pebbles, clinker and mortar (1000). Layer 1000 was overlain by modern tarmac.

5.2 Trench 2

Trench 2, which measured approximately 0.6m in width by 2.7.m in length and 0.8m in depth, was orientated roughly northwest to southeast (with a north to south aligned extension measuring approximately 1.5m) and was located in front of the northeastern corner of the northern wing of the hall.

The earliest layer encountered in Trench 2 was a red sandy layer (2007). At the base of the trench, and cut into layer 2007, a number of sandstone blocks (F200, Fig. 3), which were part of a robbed out wall, were observed projecting slightly from beneath the east facing section. The blocks were unworked, or roughly hewn, and had been covered in a thick deposit of mortar (2006). The mortar and sandstone blocks had been sealed by a layer of red/brown sand (2004) which included charcoal flecks, brick and tile fragments, pieces of slate and lumps of mortar. Layer 2004 was overlain by a band of dark ashy sandy silt (2003), which formed a levelling layer for a floor, made from a single course of crudely made bricks (2005). The bricks were spaced out along the section with only their corners projecting, suggesting a herringbone pattern for the floor (Plate 3). The brick layer had been sealed by a mix of sand and pebbles (2002) containing modern glass bottles, over which was a band of hardcore (2001) sealed by modern tarmac.

Plate 3

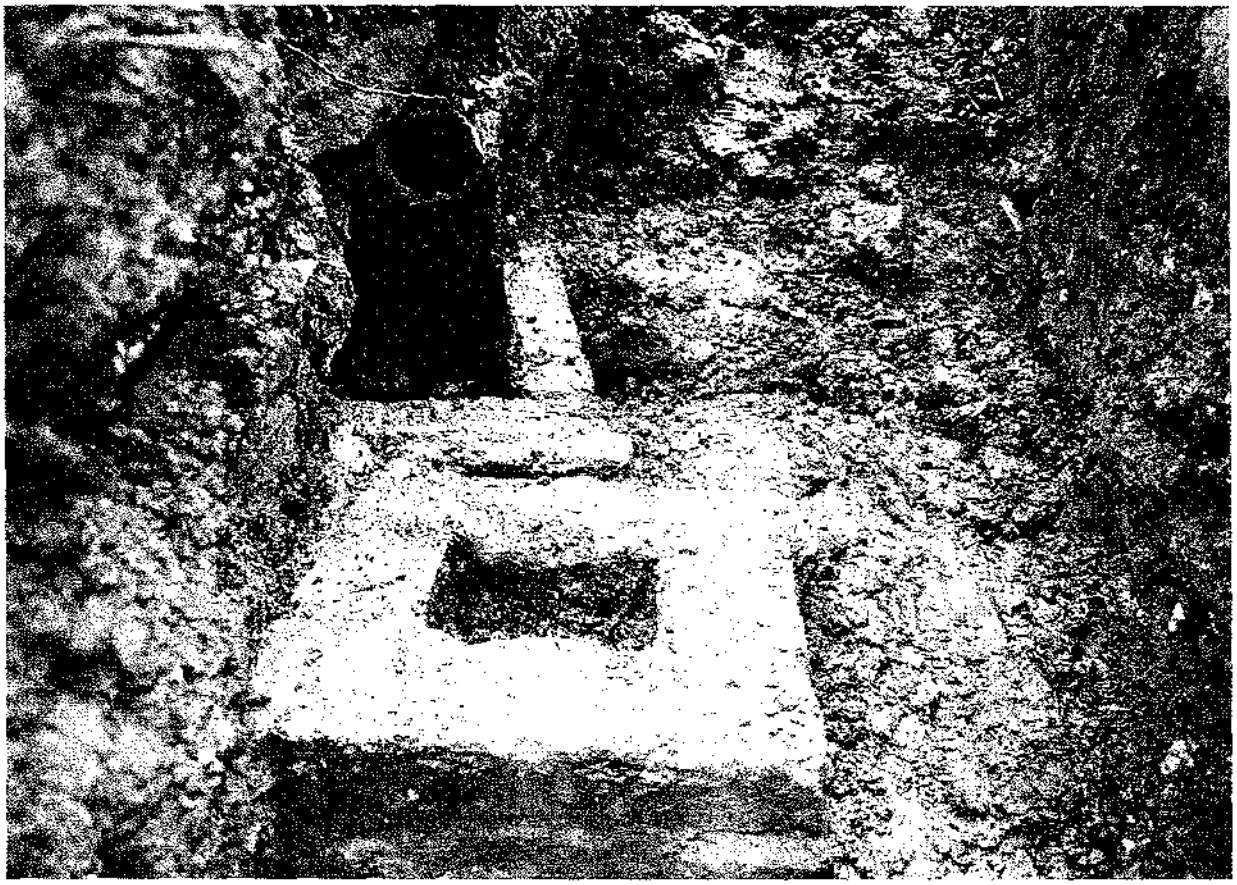


Plate 4

5.3 Trench 3

Trench 3, which measured approximately 0.6m in width by 24m and 0.8m in depth, was orientated roughly north to south and was located in front of the east facing elevation of the northern wing of the hall.

The earliest deposit encountered in Trench 3 was a layer of red sand (3001), which included, brick and tile fragments, pieces of slate and coal, as well as fragments of unworked sandstone. Approximately 1m from the northern end of Trench 3, layer 3001 had been cut by an east to west aligned, U-shaped linear cut (F300, Fig. 3) which was partially exposed in section. It measured approximately 2m in width and at least 0.3m in depth and contained a single fill of mid brown sandy silt (3000) with mortar flecking and fragments of brick and coal. Linear F300 had been sealed by a thick deposit of brown silty topsoil (3001) which was overlain by lawn. This topsoil layer contained fragments of bone, a sherd of bottle glass, an oyster shell fragment and 3 sherds of late 19th-century willow pattern pottery.

At the southern end of Trench 3 a concentration of rubble and mortar (3003) was observed spreading northwards for approximately 2m along the trench until it merged with layer 3001. Layer 3003 was sealed by a layer of sandy silt (3002) containing fragments of milk bottle and window glass, 2 sherds of late 19th-century willow pattern pottery, the base of a tea cup and three pieces of a porcelain saucer. This layer was overlain by topsoil (3000) and lawn.

5.4 Trench 4

Trench 4, which measured approximately 0.6m in width by 4m in length and 0.8m in depth, was orientated roughly east to west (with a northeast to southwest aligned extension measuring 2m in length) and was located next to the northeastern corner of the southern wing of the hall.

The earliest deposit encountered in Trench 4 was a layer of crushed brick and rubble, (4003) into which had been cut two 19th century drains in the form of low, brick-built structures (F401 and F400, Plate 4) located at the eastern end of the trench. Both F400 and F401 had been sealed by a dark brown silt (4002) which contained brick fragments and rubble. Layer 4002 was overlain by a narrow band of pale brown sand and mortar (4001) which had, in turn, been sealed by topsoil (4000).

5.5 Trench 5

Trench 5, which measured approximately 0.6m in width by 25m in length and 0.8m in depth, was orientated roughly north to south and was located in front of the east facing elevation of the southern wing of the hall.

At the northern end of Trench 5, the earliest deposit encountered was the upper horizon of a red/brown sand (5002), which had been cut (approximately 6m from the end of the

trench, Fig. 4) by the base of a faced sandstone wall with a rubble core (F503), measuring 0.8m in width. Wall F503, which was aligned east to west, consisted of a rubble core bedded into a mortar matrix but with a roughly squared northern face. Approximately 9m to the south of wall F503, a similar sandstone wall (F502, Plate 5), parallel to F503, was also encountered. A layer of cobbles (5005), consisting of medium sized rounded pebbles was observed to the south of sandstone wall F502 spreading out towards the southern end of the trench. The cobbles had been cut by the footings of an east to west aligned red brick wall (F501, Fig. 4, Plate 6) which measured 0.8m in width. A similar brick wall (F504), on the same alignment was also observed approximately 0.6m to the north of sandstone wall F503.

Approximately 4m to the north of brick wall F501 part of an arched culvert (F500, Plate 7) constructed of red brick and mortar was uncovered. The culvert, which was orientated east to west and sloped slightly towards the east, measured 0.9m in width and 0.2m in height. A breach into the vaulted roof of the culvert revealed an internal brick channel, seven courses high, which, at its western end, ran into a large, square brick-built shaft which could not be accessed. The remains of an iron winding mechanism (Plate 8) could be seen hanging from a timber at the top of the shaft and a pipe protruded from the western face of the wall. The culvert and red brick walls in Trench 5 were sealed by a layer of red sand (5003) which contained a high concentration of crushed brick and rubble. Layer 5003 had been overlain by a thick deposit of brown/grey silt (5001) with rubble inclusions and this had been sealed by topsoil (5000).

5.6 Trench 6

Trench 6, measuring 0.6m in width by 30m in length and 0.8m in depth, was orientated roughly north to south and located to the southeast of the hall. The earliest layer encountered in Trench 6 was a mid brown silt (6000, Fig. 3) which had been sealed by a layer of orange sand (6001). Layer 6001 was overlain by a light brown sandy silt (6002) which was sealed by topsoil (6003).

5.7 Trenches 7 and 8

Trench 7, measured approximately 0.6m in width by 60m in length and 0.8m in depth, was orientated roughly northwest to southeast and was located to the southwest of the water course. Trench 8, measured approximately 0.6m by 55m in length and 0.8m in depth, was orientated roughly northwest to southeast (with an extension measuring 16m orientated north to south) was located along the southern edge of the water course. Both trenches revealed the same stratigraphy as Trench 6 with an early layer of mid brown silt, sealed by orange sand which was overlain by a light brown sandy silt, topped by topsoil.

5.8 Cabling Trenches

The trenches excavated to the east of the drive and car park were 0.2m in width and 0.8m in depth. They revealed a similar stratigraphy throughout which consisted of a thick

Plate 5

Plate 6

Plate 7

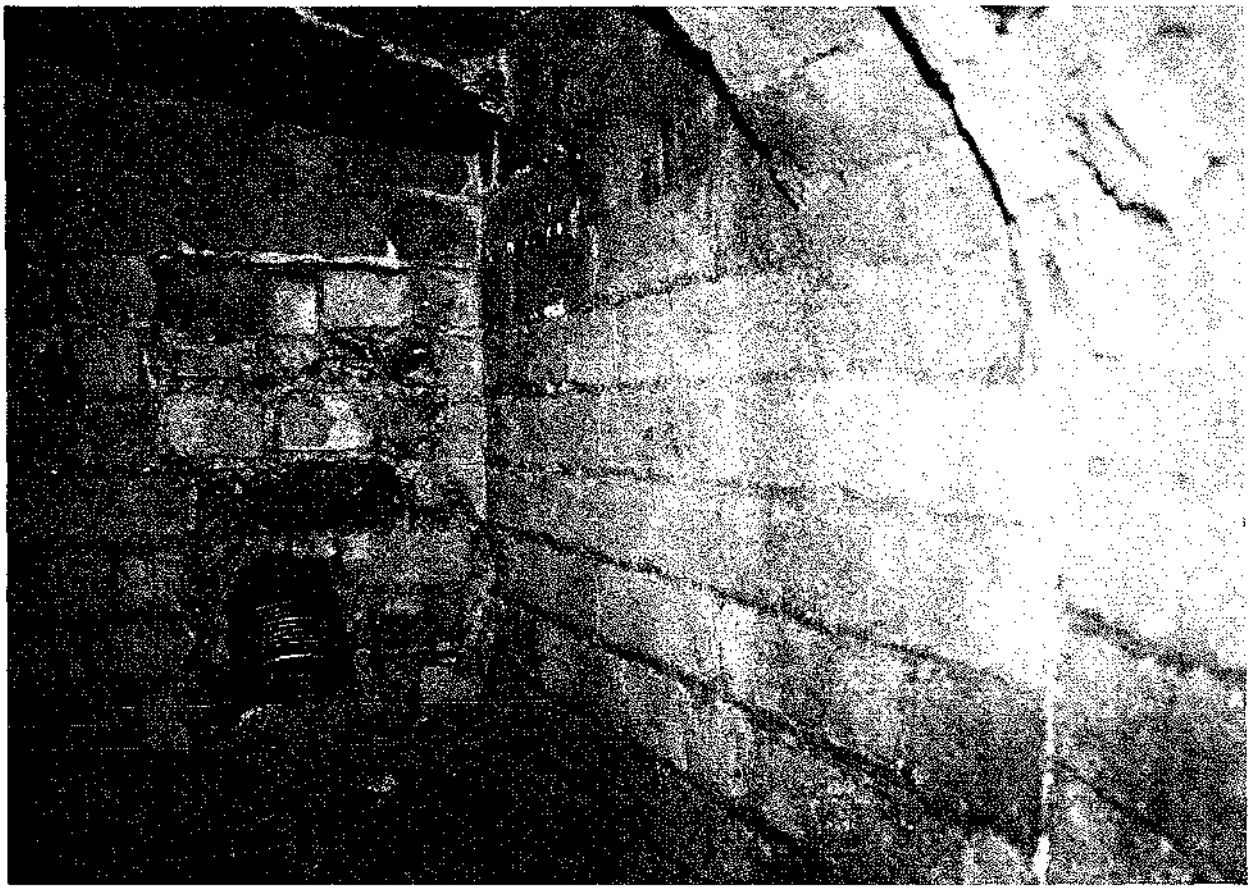


Plate 8

deposit of mid brown/orange silty sand with occasional charcoal flecking, sealed by topsoil.

6.0 Discussion

The watching brief revealed the existence of a number of building phases restricted to the area in front of the eastern elevations of the northern and southern wings of the hall. The earliest structural evidence appears to have been in the form of the sandstone walls and cobbles encountered in Trench 5 and the sandstone wall encountered in Trench 2. It is possible that the sandstone walls and cobbled surface represented an early phase of building activity, perhaps, of early to mid post-medieval date. However, as the position of the moat and medieval manor house in relation to the hall, are not securely located, it is possible that the sandstone walling and cobbles were associated with the original medieval manor house which is depicted by Stebbing Shaw as a grand sandstone structure (Plate 2).

The brick walls in Trench 5 appear to represent a later phase of building activity, probably contemporary with the hall of the 1740s, which was itself originally built in brick (the brickwork was concealed beneath 'Roman Cement' rendering in the 19th century, pers. comm. Hemmingway). It is possible that these walls were garden walls. Alternatively, they may have been associated with the structures which once abutted the eastern elevations of the north and south wings, although, the scarring for these structures on the façade of the building, did not appear to relate to the position of the brick walls in Trench 5. In addition, no brick walls, or, any evidence of brick walls, were observed in Trench 3. The brick features and arched culvert located in Trenches 1 and 5 were possibly part of an associated inter-connected drainage system of 19th century date, during which time a complete redesign of the house was inaugurated (dated 1823, pers. comm. Hemmingway). The arched culvert sloped slightly towards the east and probably emptied out into the water course. The linear feature observed in Trench 3 may be an earlier garden feature, perhaps a hedge.

The layers encountered in all of the trenches in front of the hall, contained substantial amounts of crushed brick and rubble and were likely to have been deliberately deposited during phases of systematic raising of the ground level. Such phases of activity may have been contemporary with the construction of the hall, or, represented later activity connected to hard landscaping of the gardens in the immediate vicinity of the hall. The red sandy layer encountered in Trenches 2 and 5, over which the sandstone walls and cobbles had been laid might have been the upper horizon of moat fill. Likewise the mid-brown silt layer in the base of Trenches 6, 7 and 8 might have represented moat fill, although a buried soil seems more likely. If this layer was moat fill, however, this would indicate that the moat had a southeasterly location in relation to the position of the hall. The sandy layers encountered in Trenches 6, 7 and 8 as well as in the cabling trenches were probably deposited as build-up and levelling during phases of hard landscaping in the park.

7.0 Acknowledgements

The project was carried out on behalf of Charnock and Slater Limited. The site was monitored for Staffordshire County Council by Chris Wardle. Thanks are due to John Hemmingway, who monitored the project on behalf of Dudley Borough Council, for his advice and comments. Thanks are also due to the management and ground workers of Charnock and Slater for their help and co-operation. The watching brief was carried out by Helen Martin, Erica Macey and Emma Hancox. The report was written by Helen Martin with illustrations by Nigel Dodds, Kirsty Nichol monitored the project on behalf of BUFAU and edited the final report.

8.0 References

BUFAU 2003 *WSI for a Watching Brief at Himley Hall, Himley, Staffordshire*

APPENDIX I

Himley Hall, Himley, Staffordshire (SMR 09209)

Written Scheme of Investigation for a Watching Brief (2003)

1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Summary

This Written Scheme of Investigation is concerned with outlining the aims and methodology to be followed for a watching brief during groundworks associated with a replacement sewage pumping station at Himley Hall, Himley, Staffordshire (situated at NGR SO 8883 9156). The document outlines the aims of the archaeological investigations and the methods to be employed during the watching brief. An outline of the reporting procedures is also provided. The site is archaeologically sensitive, and adherence to this written scheme of investigation will ensure that the requirements of the Local Planning Authority can be adequately discharged. Any changes to the methodology set down in this document will be discussed and agreed with the Staffordshire County Archaeologist, before implementation.

1.2 Background

Himley Hall is believed to occupy the site of a former medieval moated manor house (SMR 01149). An etching by Stebbing Shaw, dating to c.1735, depicts a large house occupying the platform, rising directly from the moat, with a wide water filled moat on three sides at least. The house is shown as having a westerly aspect and was reached by a permanent brick or stone bridge across the moat. The manor house, and the Barony of Birmingham, was inherited in 1740 by John Ward of Sedgley. He demolished the house and backfilled the moat, constructing a new palladio style residence on the site (SMR 09209). Ward was also responsible for moving the village of Himley, which was originally located immediately to the west of the house. The village was moved much further west to be located outside the park, and the houses and church were levelled (pers. comm. Hemmingway). Today Himley Hall is a grade 2* listed building (LB 05/059), set in extensive parkland (c.205ha). which may originally have been landscaped by Nathaniel Richmond, with later developments made by Lancelot 'Capability' Brown (UK Database of Historic Parks and Gardens).

Previous archaeological work on the site includes small scale excavation carried out by John Hemmingway, during which iron slag was recovered (pers. comm. Hemmingway). It is possible that the slag dates to the occupation of the site by Dud Dudley in the 1630s when he was experimenting with smelting iron ore in a furnace (ibid).

1.3 Overall aims

The overall objective of the archaeological work will be to record all surviving archaeological deposits and finds disturbed or exposed by the excavation of the service trenches.

2.0 WATCHING BRIEF

The watching brief will be concerned with monitoring the excavation of service trenches and the installation of a sewage pump.

2.1 Aims

The objectives of the archaeological watching brief will be to identify any potential archaeology and to excavate and fully record such deposits. Trenches may reveal evidence for

- the location of the moat.
- the original course of the stream, to the southeast of the house, which may have originally been a feeder or leat associated with the moat and which presently shows signs of being canalised as part of the landscaping of the park.
- the level of the original ground surface and the degree to which it has been hard landscaped; which areas have been built up or scarped down.
- the style and extent of structures which abutted the eastern elevations of the north and south wings, for which there is only scant evidence visible in the façade of the building.
- other, no longer extant, garden features.

2.2 Methodology

A series of site visits will be made to inspect all open service trenches prior to their backfilling. All stratigraphic sequences will be recorded, even where no archaeology is present. Features will be planned at a scale of 1:20, and sections will be drawn through all cut features and significant vertical stratigraphy at a scale of 1:10. A comprehensive written record will be maintained using a continuous numbered context system on *pro-forma* context cards. Written records and scale plans will be supplemented by photographs, using monochrome and colour print and colour slide photography. These records will comprise part of the site archive.

The full site archive will include all artefactual and/or ecofactual remains recovered from the site. The overall co-ordination of finds strategy will be the responsibility of Lynne Bevan (BUFAU Senior Post-Excavation Manager). The nature of the context may ultimately determine the on-site collection policy in terms of the levels of residuality and intrusiveness. For instance, it is proposed to retain only a selective, but representative,

sample of finds such as later building materials. However, all ceramics and small finds will be retained.

All finds will be processed during and immediately following the fieldwork. An immediate assessment will be made of any special conservation requirements. If any finds require stabilisation, advice will be sought from specialists in artefact conservation and will be conserved. Otherwise, finds will be stored in the appropriate conditions to minimise deterioration (for example, dry storage in Stewart boxes with silica gel where necessary).

3.0 STAFFING

The project will be managed by Kirsty Nichol (AIFA) for BUFAU, the fieldwork will be carried out by an experienced and qualified archaeologist.

Specialist staff will be, where appropriate:
Stephanie Ratkai - medieval and post-medieval ceramics.
Lynne Bevan - Post-Excavation Manager, lithics and small finds
Annette Hancocks - Romano-British ceramics.
Dr Ann Woodward - prehistoric ceramics.
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.

4.0 REPORT

The results of the investigations will be described in a combined, illustrated report, which will contain the following:

1. Summary.
2. Aims and methodology.
3. Description of the archaeological background.
4. Methodology for each component of the work.
5. A narrative description of the results.
6. A discussion of the evidence, set in its local, regional and national context.
7. A summary and specialist assessment of the finds evidence.
8. Plans at appropriate scales, related to OS base mapping.
9. A copy of the Written Scheme of Investigation.

Two copies of the report will be submitted to the Staffordshire Sites and Monuments Record, and two to the Local Planning Authority with a completed Activity and Source

Submission Form. A summary of the work will be offered to West Midlands Archaeology and any other appropriate journal.

5.0: ARCHIVE

The site archive will be prepared according to the guidelines set down in Appendix 3 of the Management of Archaeology Projects. It is intended that the archive will be deposited with the Potteries Museum and Art Gallery, Stoke-on-Trent, with the prior notification and agreement of the museum.

6.0: HEALTH AND SAFETY

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

7.0: 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
January 2003

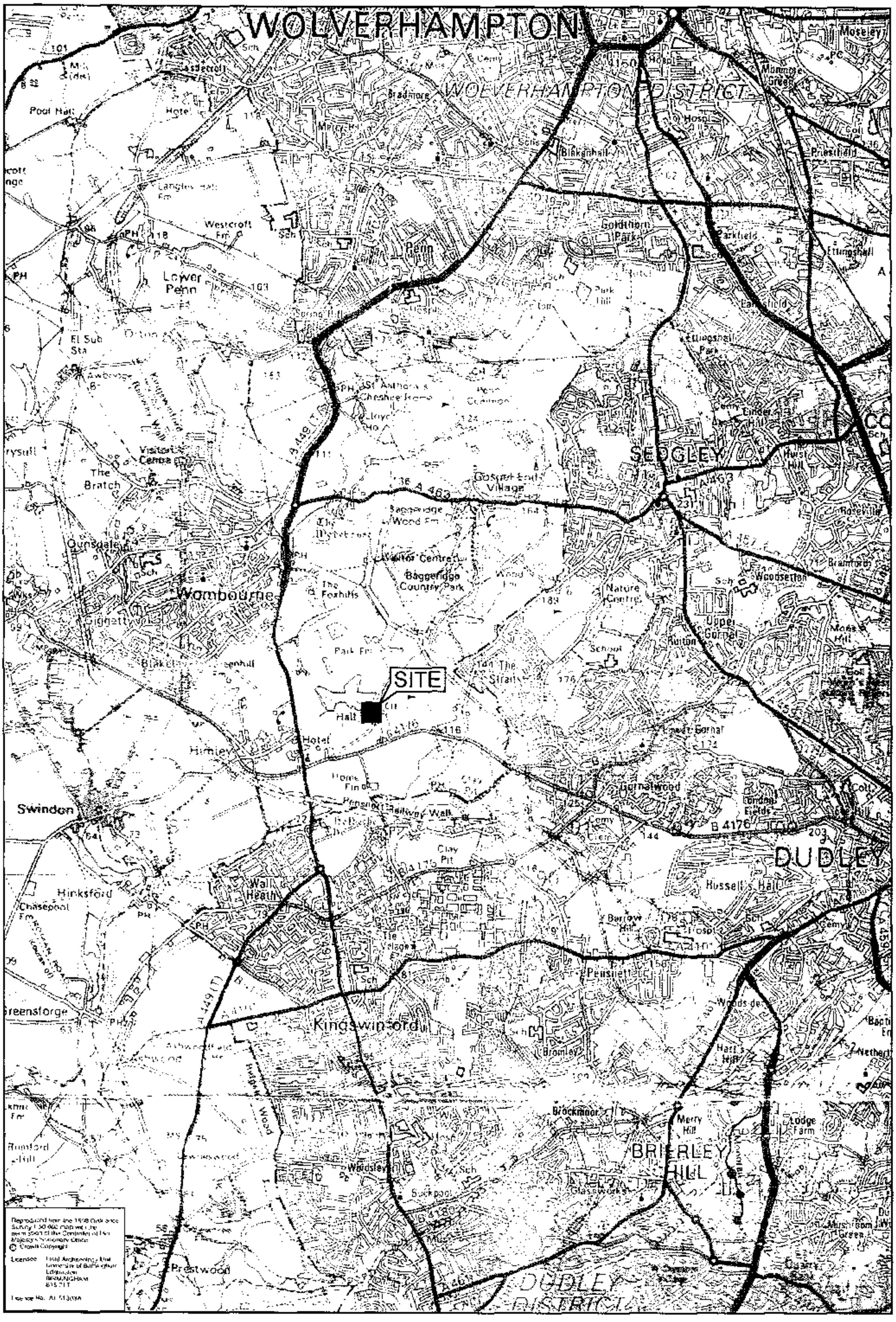
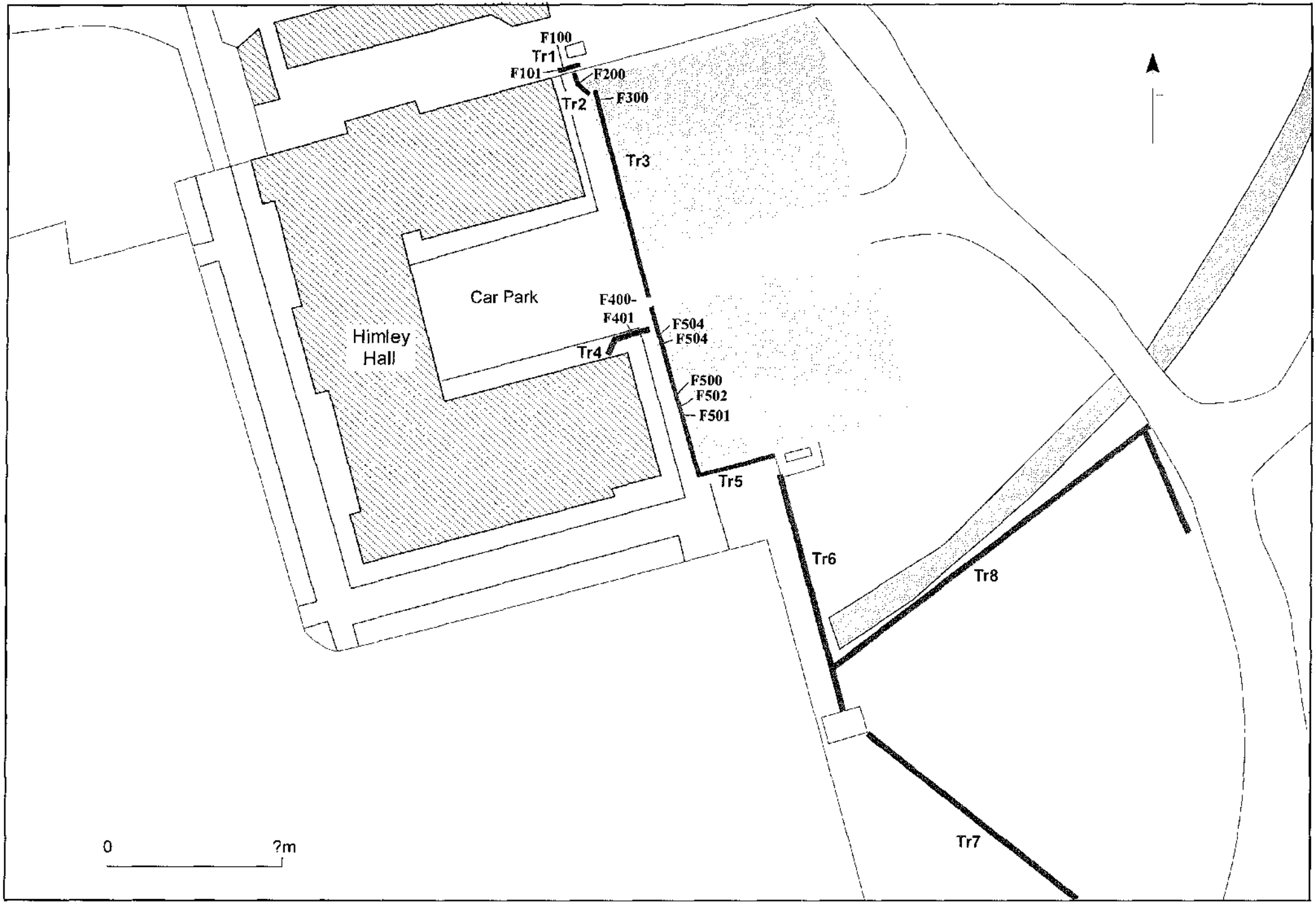

WOLVERHAMPTON
WOLVERHAMPTON DISTRICT
Pool Hall
Bradmore
Blakenhall
Goldthorn Park
Parkfield
Ettingshall
Westcroft Fm
Lower Penn
Penn
El Sub Sta
Penn Common
St Anthony's Cheshire Home
Visitor Centre
The Bratch
Gospel End Village
Baggeridge Wood Fm
Baggeridge Country Park
SEDGLEY
A 463
A 449 (T)
Woodsetton
Wombourne
The Foxhills
Nature Centre
Upper Gornal
Ruiton
Park Fm
SITE
Halt
Himley
Hotel
Swindon
Clay Pit
Gornalwood
DUDLEY
B 4176
Russell's Hall
Hinksford
Chasepool Fm
Wall Heath
The Village
Barrow Hill
Pensnett
Greensforge
Kingswinford
Bromley
Brockmoor
Merry Hill
BRIERLEY HILL
Glassworks
Lodge Farm
Wordsley
Prestwood
DUDLEY DISTRICT

Fig.1


F100
Tr1
F101
F200
Tr2
F300
Tr3
Car Park
F400-
F401
F504
F504
Himley
Hall
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Tr5
Tr6
Tr8
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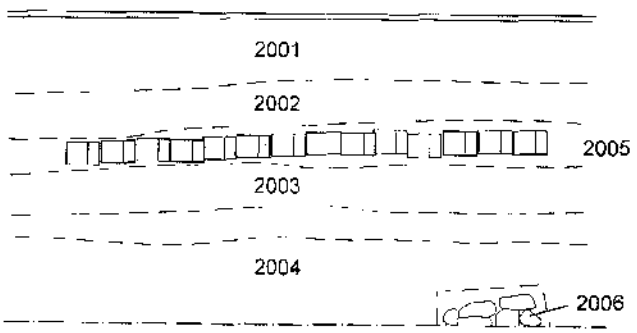
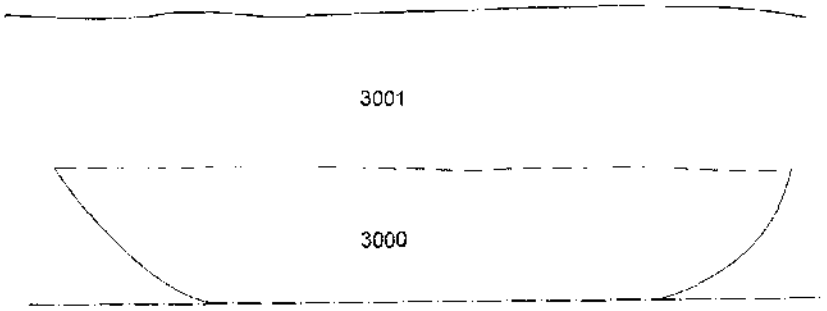
Fig.2

East Facing section



F200

West Facing section



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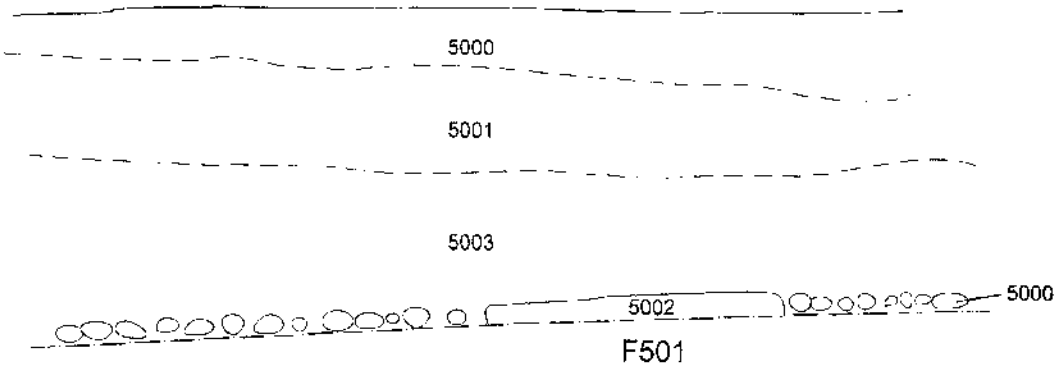
West Facing section



F501

West Facing section

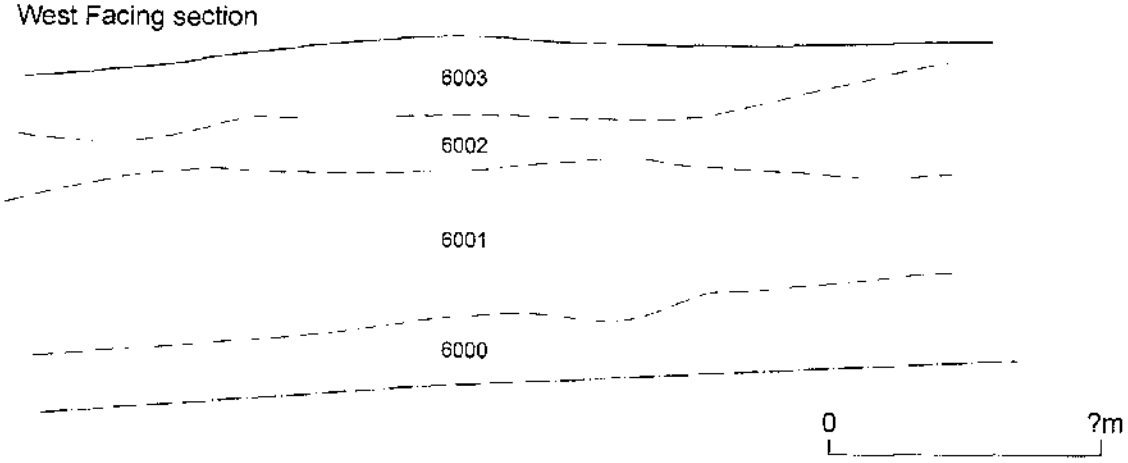


Fig.3

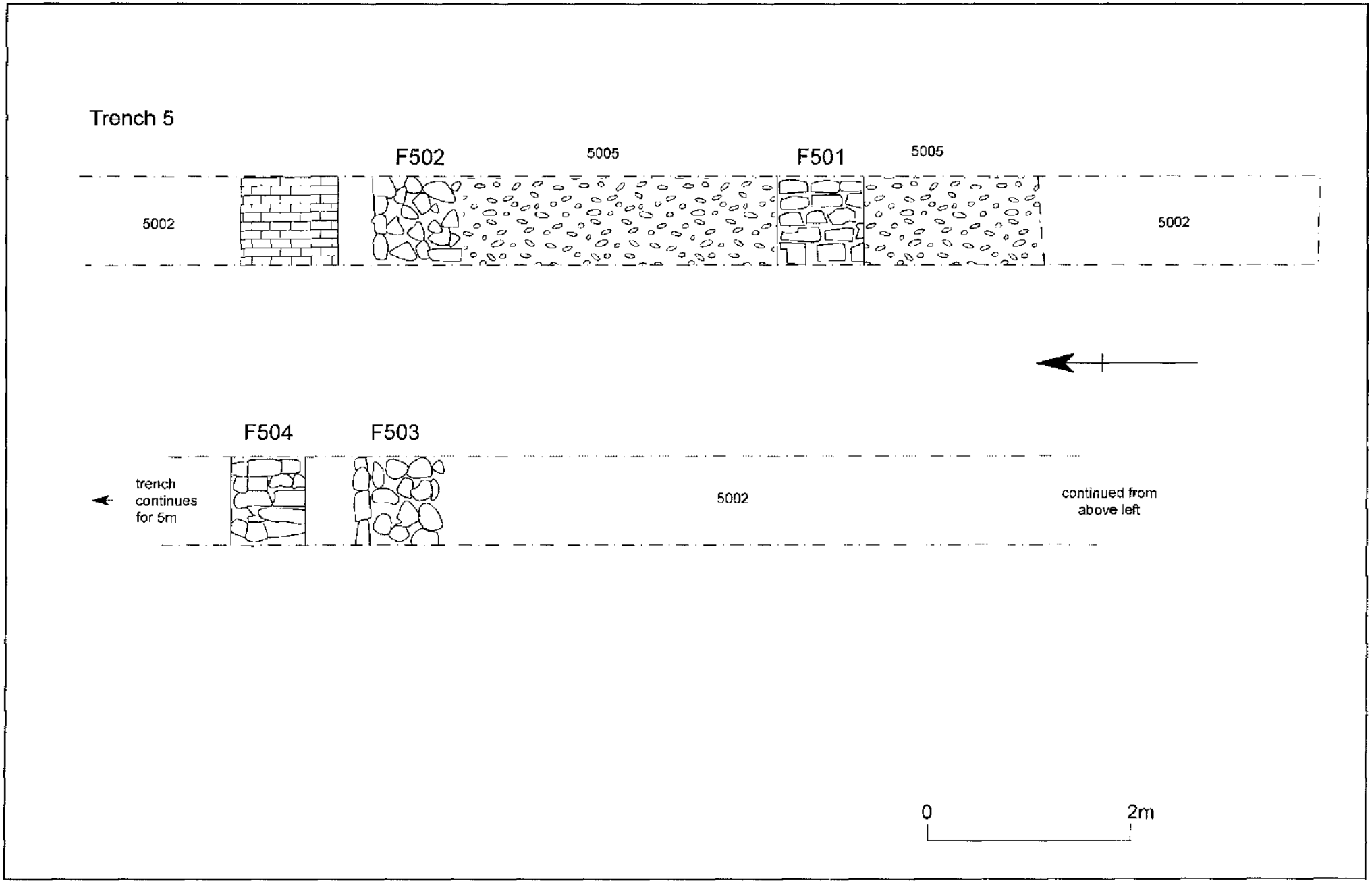

Trench 5
F502
5005
F501
5005
5002
5002
F504
F503
trench
continues
for 5m
5002
continued from
above left
0
2m

Fig.4