PN. 1293

An Archaeological Desk-based Assessment of land off Limekiln Lane, Wellington, Shropshire. 2005 Project No. 1293

March 2005

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SUMMARY

A desk-based assessment was carried out in March 2005 by Birmingham Archaeology on land off Limekiln Lane, Wellington, Shropshire (NGR SJ 6550 1050). David Wilson Homes West Midlands Ltd commissioned the project in advance of potential redevelopment. The work comprised a full examination of available maps and other documentary sources, in addition to a walkover survey.

The results suggest that the study area was part of the northern boundary of the medieval royal forest of the Wellington Haye and was associated with the Old Hall. They also indicate that the study area may have been associated with medieval and post-medieval activity associated with industrial practices within the Wellington Haye, such as lime and brick production. The later history of the study area suggests a reconfiguring of the land boundaries prior to redevelopment of the eastern portion of the study area for houses in the 20^{th} century.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

This desk-based assessment has been prepared by Birmingham Archaeology on behalf of David Wilson Homes West Midlands Ltd in advance of the proposed redevelopment of two parcels of land off Limekiln Lane, Wellington, Shropshire. These are Parcel 2 and Parcel 3, as illustrated in figure 2 and form part of a larger area of proposed redevelopment, the remainder of which is not the subject of this deskbased assessment. The aim of the report was to establish the potential of known historical and archaeological information, based on existing data. To that end the assessment comprised a consultation of all available cartographic, primary and secondary documentary sources, supplemented by a walkover survey of the site. The assessment was informed by an archaeological brief prepared by the Historic Environment Officer of Shropshire County Council and adhered to the guidelines set down in the *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Desk-Based Assessments* (Institute of Field Archaeologists 2001).

2.0 LOCATION AND GEOLOGY OF THE STUDY AREA

The study area comprised two parcels of land (Parcel 2 and Parcel 3) located either side of Limekiln Lane, centred on NGR SJ 6550 1050, 1km to the south of Wellington town centre, Shropshire (Fig. 1). Parcel 2 consisted of a sub-rectangular plot of land to the west of Limekiln Lane, sub-divided by a stream course running north to south. It is currently open farmland. Parcel 3 contained the Old Hall School complex which is due for renovation under the current proposal. It is bounded by Churchill Lane to the east and north, Mount Gilbert to the south and Limekiln Lane to the west.

The underlying geology is part of the Upper Carboniferous strata outcrop which runs in a discontinuous belt across the county and is a source of coal, brick clay and ironstone. Lower and Middle Carboniferous rocks occur locally beneath the Coal Measures sequence, and produce Lower Carboniferous Dolomitic Limestone. The localised occurrence of coal, ironstone, limestone and timber in the Ironbridge area was a major factor in the birth of the Industrial Revolution.

3.0 **OBJECTIVES**

- To identify the likely character, extent, quality and significance of the known or potential archaeological resource in a local, regional and national context as appropriate.
- To recommend a strategy for further field evaluation, if appropriate, where the character and value of the resource is not sufficiently defined to permit a mitigation strategy or other response to be devised.

4.0 METHODOLOGY

A walk-over site survey was undertaken which involved an external examination of the school and grounds due for redevelopment in order to identify any surviving earthworks and/ or other evidence which may be of archaeological significance. In addition, the effect of any later landscaping and building activities, which may have impacted on archaeological features and deposits was noted.

The Shropshire County Record Office was consulted for all relevant historic maps and other primary and secondary sources. In addition an inspection of documentary data drawn from the Shropshire Sites and Monuments Record (SMR) was undertaken, which examined the area contained within a 750m radius of the site, in order to establish the presence of relevant historical or archaeological remains in the surrounding area. In addition, Shrewsbury and Wellington Reference libraries were visited and an examination made of any other relevant documentary sources.

5.0 PRESENT CHARACTER OF THE SITE (Fig.2)

Presently, as noted above the site is split into two distinct areas, Parcel 2 and 3. Parcel 2 survives as two open fields (1 and 2). The boundary between the two fields was defined by the north - south running stream which continued to the north before passing to the east beneath Limekiln Lane. Parcel 3 is presently occupied by two schools, with a central boundary fence separating the school grounds from the playing fields oriented north – south. The playing field has been denoted as Field 1 and the school ground as Field 2.

Field 1 of Parcel 2, the westernmost of the fields, was bounded to the south by farmland, to the west by a cricket pitch and to the north by the Old Hall Pool and associated buildings. These buildings are presently utilised as a nursery school. The

topography of the land demonstrated a pronounced rise in the south which sloped away to the north, west and east. At the northern end of the field a large rectangular area of disturbed ground was observed which measured approximately 20m by 10m in which earthworks survived to the south and west. It appeared to be a relatively recent disturbance and may have been associated with excavation or demolition of a temporary structure.

Field 2 is a narrower strip of land which runs parallel to Limekiln Lane. It is bounded by the lane to the east, open farmland to the south, residential houses to the north and the stream to the west. The topography of the ground included low lying land running along the centre of the field, the land sloping from the western and eastern boundaries towards the centre. The land is undulating and suggests the former course of the stream may have run along the centre of the field.

It would appear that the stream course was diverted in the past to run at an unnatural level along the present field boundary. This was accomplished by means of banks which altered the stream course at a point in the field south of the present study area and caused it to maintain a higher level before it fell sharply at the northern boundary of Parcel 2. The reason for this is presumed to be associated with the water source of Old Hall Pool which may earlier have been supplied by the diverted stream water. If activities or structures associated with the immediate location had existed formerly there is high potential for survival since there has been minimal recent below-ground intrusion.

Field 1 of Parcel 3 is now occupied by the school playing fields. It is bounded by Limekiln Lane to the west, Mount Gilbert to the south, the school grounds to the east and a row of semi-detached houses to the north. The topography of the land slopes gently from south to north. Two earthwork features were noted. The first was a sharp linear slope which ran east – west across the site and continued into Field 2. It appeared to be the extant remains of a former field boundary. The boundary was most likely to be a continuation on the eastern side of Limekiln Lane, of the linear boundary which ran along the southern edge of Parcel 2. At the northern edge of Field 1 was another earthwork feature which may delimit the boundary of another field. It was a double-sided earthwork which ran approximately east – west, parallel but to the south of the northern boundary of Parcel 3. It was c.2.0 - 3.0m wide and terminated at the eastern edge of Field 2. Between the two sets of earthworks the land was very clearly lower and appeared to have been levelled deliberately.

Field 2 had been altered heavily by later activity. Not only were there the structural remains of the two schools, but also landscaping associated with the playgrounds and surrounding gardens. This suggested only about half the area remained undeveloped, with perhaps an enhanced potential for the survival of *in situ*, archaeologically significant deposits below-ground. The natural ground again sloped south – north with a pronounced slope towards Mount Gilbert in the southeastern corner. With the exception of the continuation of the east - west field boundary, the only other observable features were a series of three mounds at the northern end of the site and the remains of a possible field boundary towards the northwestern corner. These appeared to have been a result of landscaping associated with the construction of an adjacent playground and probably represent the re-deposition of local spoil material.

Parcel 3 appeared largely to have been open fields until the construction of the schools and for this reason there is a potential for the survival of archaeological deposits below-ground. Clearly, in the direct locale of the school buildings potential will be lower and landscaping associated with the construction of the playgrounds and gardens may have further served to truncate any features which may survive.

6.0 HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The site lies on the outskirts of Wellington approximately 1km southeast of the town centre. The earliest history associated with the site relates to the presence of the Roman road of Watling Street approximately 200m to the north of the study area in Parcel 2. This road ran east - west and continued westward to the Roman town of Viriconium (Wroxeter). However, settlement has not been recorded in the vicinity of the road around Wellington.

No archaeological evidence exists for continuity of settlement between the Romano-British and Anglo-Saxon periods. However, evidence does exist to suggest the possibility of administrative continuity within Wrockwardine hundred (VCH, 204). Wellington may have been the chief settlement prior to 1066 and certainly by the time of the Domesday book it had five dependant berewicks. At this time the population of the township was low at only 33. However, the town probably grew in the 12th and 13th centuries. A market charter was granted in 1244 and probably resulted in the enlargement of the town core during the later part of the 13th century. The population of the town remained stable for several centuries but by the beginning of the 19th century had increased to 4000 inhabitants (1801 Census Returns).

The 19th century, in common with much of the British Isles witnessed the most rapid expansion of the town. Watling Street became a significant routeway during the late-18th to early-19th century and was renamed the Holyhead Road, in large part resulting from the union of the Irish and British parliaments. The Shrewsbury canal opened to the south of Wellington in 1797 but is unlikely to have had a significant effect on the town. It was only with the arrival of the Shrewsbury-Wellington railway in 1849 that the town became truly connected. However, it continued to remain a relatively small market town well into the 20th century. Even with the designation of the Telford new town the growth of Wellington has not been marked.

The early history of the immediate area surrounding the study area was mainly associated with its designation as a Royal hunting forest known as the Wellington Haye. Henry II was known to have hunted there, although he stayed in the Arleston township. The tenure of the forest has been associated with the Forester family since the 12th century when Hugh Forester was the first known 'serjeant' of the Wellington Haye. The 'serjeantry' may have been established by one of the Norman Earls by or Henry I (Eyton 1854, 40). The Haye at this time comprised half a 'virgate' of land held by the 'serjeantry'. Its borders were described in the Cartulary of Shrewsbury in 1301 (Rees 1975). The northern boundary ran along Watling Street from the 'Clerknebrugge' (Clerk's Bridge) to the 'Baylebrok(e)' which is probably the present day stream running through Parcel 2 (Gelling 2001, 68). The 'serjeantry' appeared to remain in the family as a hereditary title. The borough continued to be known as the Wellington Haye until 1623, but appeared for the first time as Watling Street in 1684

(VCH, 219). This may be due to the fact that the Wellington Manor was acquired by the Foresters in 1659 and the change of name avoided confusion.

The Old Hall still has surviving timber-framed ranges on the east and north which are probably date to the early- 17^{th} century. It has been suggested that some of the building is earlier, dating to the foundation of the hall by Edward Forester in 1480 and that subsequent alterations were the result of work by Francis Forester in 1620 (Leighton 1901). The Old Hall became a school around 1800. Further ranges on the south and west of the building had been demolished by the 1830s. The Old Hall continued to be augmented throughout the 19^{th} century and the final work at the site took place *c*.1932 with the addition of the gymnasium (VCH, 219).

The economic history of the area was associated predominantly with its use as a forest. The woodland associated with the Wellington Haye covered the majority of the land in the township during the 12^{th} century and this continued throughout the majority of the medieval period. It was not until post-medieval times that deforestation took place within the limits of the Haye.

Even during its earliest history the Wellington Haye was used for limestone extraction. The Hundred-Roll of 1255 included "two burnings of lime in the Wellington Haye" which involved the use of 500 oaks (Eyton 1854, 60). By the later 17th century, however, the Steeraway lime kilns had turned to the use of coal. A railway linked Steeraway to Watling Street by the late 1730s although this is not depicted on John Rocque's map and it remains unclear whether this was the origin of the establishment of Limekiln Lane (VCH, 227).

Brick-making was known at several sites by the mid- 17^{th} century, but intermittently. However, by the later 18^{th} century demand had grown and more permanent central sites were established. In 1763 Brooke Forester let a kiln in Wellington for 21 years to a tenant (VCH, 227). It is likely that even if the brickyard were not situated within the vicinity of the site this is the likely explanation for the field names located on the 1841 Tithe Apportionment which suggest the locale of brick-clay extraction (*see below p.6*).

Mills owned by Francis Forester were thought to have existed within the parish of Watling Street in 1666 (VCH, 224), but it is unclear if these were directly associated with the Old Hall property or were simply located within the township. This may correlate with the field names found on the 1841 Tithe Apportionment (*see below* p.6).

7.0 ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

Archaeological research within the Wellington area has been limited. The earliest remains located during archaeological excavation are associated with the Roman remains of Watling Street. Excavations at Overley Hill revealed the cross-section of the Roman road (Meeson 1966). Excavations at Dothill Park, north of Wellington Town revealed the remains of several early-medieval field enclosures (Maxwell 1960). Directly to the south of the study area Lancaster University Archaeology Unit undertook an evaluation around the Dawley Road area (Drury *et al* 1994, SMR

ESA3383). These located predominantly post-medieval remains associated with the mining industry. The town centre of Wellington was surveyed as part of the Central Marches Historic Towns Survey (Dalwood 1996). No work has, however, been undertaken within the immediate area of the site.

8.0 CARTOGRAPHIC SOURCES

The earliest cartographic evidence relating to the area is John Rocque's Map of Shropshire which dates to 1752. This shows that Watling Street had been turn-piked and depicted the Old Hall. However, Limekiln Lane has not been constructed at this time. The 1808 Map of Shropshire by Robert Baugh, showed Limekiln Lane had been constructed, presumably at the same time as the initiation of the Steeraway Lime Works and associated settlement which are noted on the map at this time.

The first detailed map of the area is the Tithe Apportionment of 1841. This gave the names and boundaries of the field systems. Field 1 of Parcel 3 was at this point split into two fields (142 and 143) and was named Dovehouse Park. Field 148, Sandy Park adjoined Dovehouse Park on its northern boundary. Taking this into consideration, and with their proximity to Old Hall, it is possible that the names reflect emparking. Certainly, on the 1883 edition of the Ordnance Survey map, some 42 years later, the grounds to the east and southeast of the building had undergone significant landscaping. The stream still appeared to form the eastern boundary, however, the southern boundary had been altered at a later date. Old Hall Pool to the north was named Rickyard Pool. Field 2 appeared to be similar to its present form, the altered southern boundary the only difference. At this time it was named Brick Furlong along with several other fields along the edge of Limekiln Lane. This may suggest the field was used for clay extraction, and several of the fields in the area were named Brick Kiln Leasow suggesting that brick was fired in the locality. The availability of clay and the local coppice wood for fuel meant this would have been an ideal location.

Parcel 3 was dominated by a large field called Mill Field, one of two on the eastern side of Limekiln Lane. The northern boundary of this field may still survive as the earthwork located at the northern edge of Parcel 3 (*see above, p.3*). The Mill is unknown although it has been suggested it could have been a Windmill (Gelling 2001, 68). However, the presence of the diverted watercourse in Parcel 2 which may lead to Old Hall Pool, and the adjacent 17th century farmhouse, could suggest the building was originally a Mill. Examination of the southern gable of this building revealed it could be a later alteration in brick to the earlier timber-framed building with brick infill. Its close proximity to the waterfront could suggest there was a wheel and mill-race here prior to its conversion to a conventional farmhouse building.

The Old Hall is present on the Tithe Apportionment Map and situated on the opposite corner of Limekiln Lane is a malt-house. This may be the predecessor to the Shropshire Brewery which opened up on the opposite side of Watling Street.

By 1883, when the first edition of the Ordnance Survey Map appeared there had been a radical reorganisation of the field boundaries, and by this period they more closely resembled those of the present day. The linear boundary which demarcated the western edge of Parcel 2 was in place, along with the southern boundary. This continued across Limekiln Lane oriented east - west and was probably represented by the earthwork observed centrally in Parcel 3 (see above, p.3). Interestingly the stream fed a bathing pool in the Old Hall grounds at this time. By 1902 the Old Hall Pool was separated from the fields to the south by an east - west boundary. This had been moved further to the south by 1927 and further sub-division of the Old Hall Pool site had occurred by 1937. Miniature Rifle Ranges appeared in the southeast corner of Field 2 in Parcel 2 by 1927. Throughout this period there was no change to the area associated with Parcel 3.

The area west of Limekiln Lane, including Parcel 2 remained undeveloped throughout the second half of the 20th century. However, the area to the east was almost totally redeveloped as a housing estate during the post-war period. The majority of Parcel 3 survived this redevelopment, the school having kept extensive undeveloped playing fields.

9.0 EVIDENCE FROM THE SITES AND MONUMENTS RECORD

All Sites and Monuments Records (SMR) from a 750m radius centred on SJ 6580 1095, were examined, excluding the historic town core which was assessed under Central Marches Historic Town Survey (Dalwood 1996). The details of all entries within the SMR are shown in the appendix.

The earliest remains detailed on the SMR are the remains of Watling Street Roman road (*see above*, p.4). No significant remains from the Roman period have been located in the immediate vicinity of the site, which could be associated with the Roman road. This suggests there is a limited likelihood of Roman activity within the immediate area. However, due to the limited nature of archaeological survey and fieldwork within the Wellington area such activity cannot be discounted.

The SMR revealed a predominantly post-medieval landscape within the immediate vicinity of the study area. It was dominated by the remains of late-medieval and post-medieval monuments, both industrial and domestic in function. Of those within the area the most significant were the remains of the Old Hall (SMR 13001) and the 17th century farmhouse (SMR 13002) located to the southwest of the Old Hall. The study area lies to the south of these two monuments and is likely to have had a strong association with them.

Two monuments with a lesser significance were within the immediate vicinity of the study area. The first, the Shropshire Brewery (SMR 7187) was located just north of the Holyhead Road and was probably the direct predecessor of the Malthouse which was noted on the Tithe Apportionment (*see above, p.6*). The second was the Arleston Toll House (SMR 15397) which lay to the east of Parcel 3. It was likely to have had little influence on the formation of the site. However, the Arleston Road itself may have had a marginal impact in terms of activity associated with its use.

No significant spot finds have been located within the immediate vicinity of the study area.

10.0 CONCLUSIONS

The study area lies well outside the historical core of Wellington town centre as defined in the Marches Historic Towns Survey (Dalwood 1996). However, it does lie in an area of particular historic interest due to its association with the former Wellington Haye and the remains of the Old Hall and Old Hall Pool buildings. The early historic evidence suggested that the study area lay within the wooded region of the Royal Haye. However, in the later medieval period clearance of these woods began.

The cartographic evidence suggests that the fields were open until the second half of the 20th century and only then was the eastern half of the study area developed. There is limited evidence to suggest that the area immediately to the south of the Old Hall may have been associated with industrial activity in the medieval period. Certainly the production of lime was occurring within the woods on Mount Gilbert from the 13th century, probably in the locale around Steeraway and there is the possibility that Limekiln Lane represented the location of an extant rail-track from the 1730s (VCH, 227). The field name evidence from the Tithe Apportionment of 1841 suggests brick extraction was occurring within Field 2 of Parcel 2.

The location of a mill recorded in 1666 may be associated with the outbuildings located around Old Hall Pool which appear to date to the 17th century. This conclusion is supported by the findings of the walk-over survey, which suggested the stream running along the field boundary between Field 1 and Field 2 (Parcel 2), had been diverted from its original course, in order to run at a higher level and so feed the Old Hall Pool. The presence of two fields on the Tithe Apportionment called Mill Field support this conclusion. The more southerly of these two fields could correspond with a low-level area of land and an east - west oriented earthwork, both located in Field 1 (Parcel 3) at the northern end.

Cartographic evidence from the later 19th century suggested that a radical re-ordering of the field system had occurred. This resulted in the creation of the field boundaries associated with Parcel 2. The east - west boundary continued over Limekiln Lane to the east, and survives as a linear earthwork running centrally across Parcel 3.

Little development appears to have occurred in Parcel 2 from the 19th century onwards although cartographic evidence locates a target range within Parcel 2 in the early-20th century. Much of Parcel 3 was redeveloped in the later 20th century, although part of the area remained undeveloped having been designated as recreation fields for the schools. However, extensive landscaping associated with the playing fields may have truncated earlier features within the eastern half of Parcel 2.

11.0 PROVISIONAL RECOMMENDATIONS

The present desk-based assessment constitutes initial work outlined in the *Brief for a Programme of Archaeological Work at Old Hall Wellington* (Watson 2004). A second phase of work, if implemented may seek to evaluate the potential for below-ground archaeological remains. The limited nature of archaeological work associated with the immediate surrounds of the study area may necessitate a programme of

watching brief work during the course of groundworks, as the next stage in the archaeological programme.

If implemented any programme of archaeological work should focus on specific areas:-

Medium Potential

• Field 2, Parcel 2 where there may be survival of potential archaeological remains associated with the diversion of the stream, which may have been associated with the Old Hall Pool and adjacent buildings to the north of Parcel 2.

Low Potential

- The northern half of Field 1, Parcel 3 where surviving earthworks may be associated with archaeological activity though this may be of modern origin.
- The southern half of Field 1, Parcel 2, the southern half of Field 1, Parcel 3 and Field 2, Parcel 3 have no discernible earthwork features.

12.0 ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Thanks are due to David Wilson Homes West Midlands Ltd for commissioning the project. Chris Hewitson undertook the documentary research and walkover survey and produced the final report. Mark Hewson edited the report and managed the project for Birmingham Archaeology, and Nigel Dodds prepared the illustrations. Thanks also to Penny Ward of the Sites and Monuments Record within the Shropshire County Council for and to the staff of the Wellington Local Studies Centre, Wellington Library and the Shropshire Archives, Shrewsbury for all their assistance. Mike Watson, Historic Environment Officer for Shropshire County Council monitored the project and provided comments on the final report.

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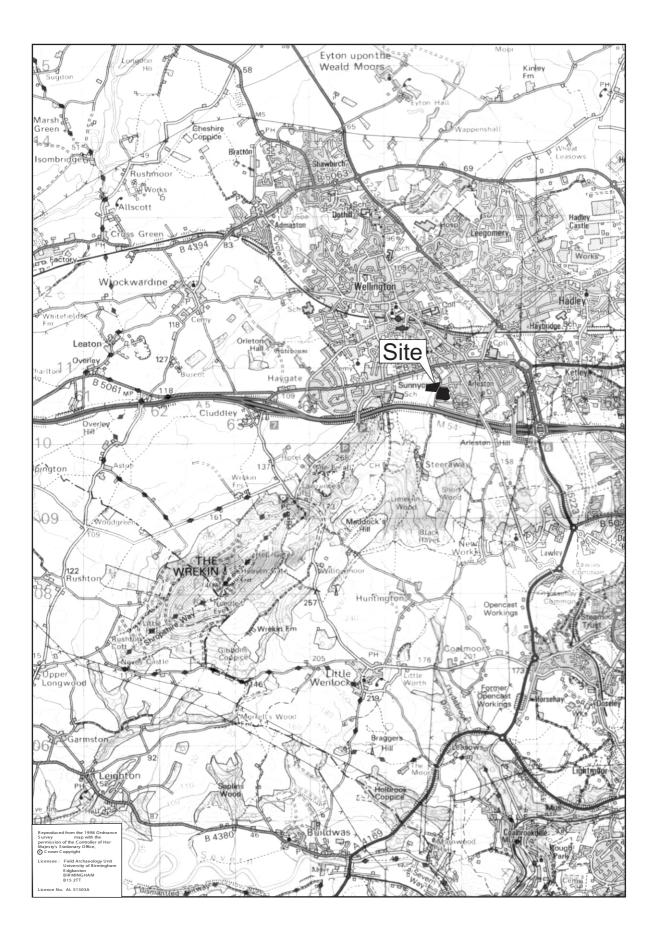
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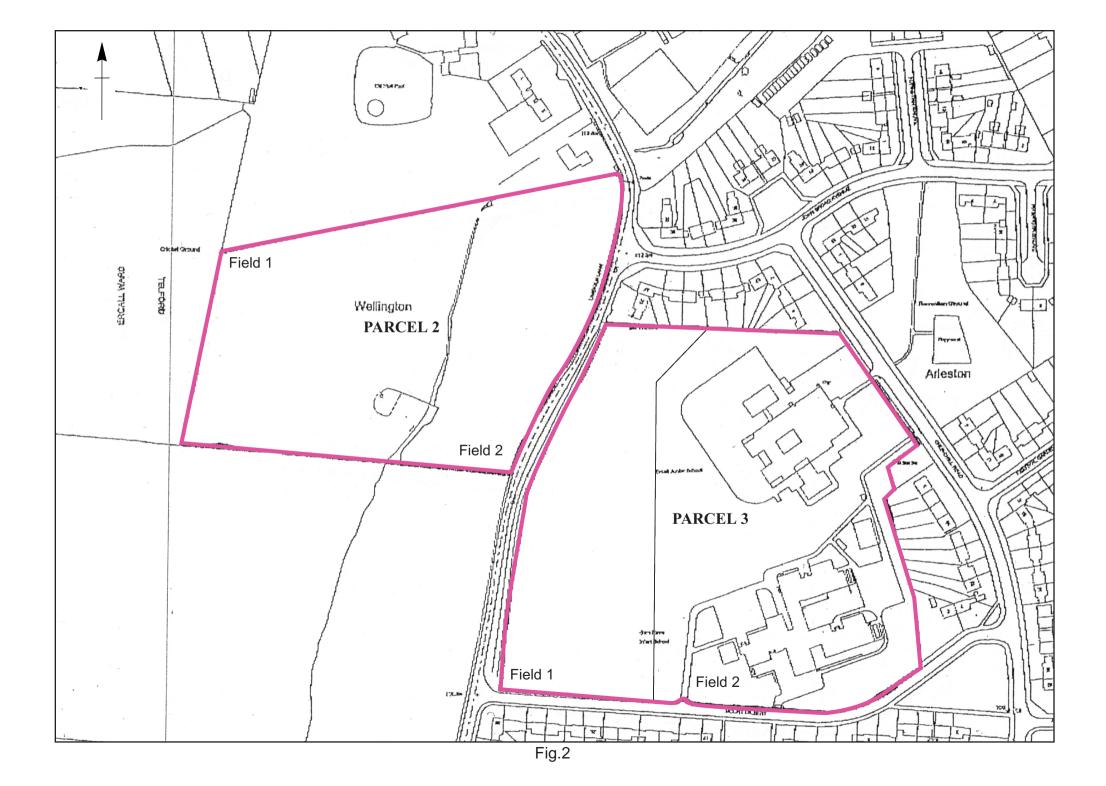
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Wellington Directories 1900 (SA L67vf)





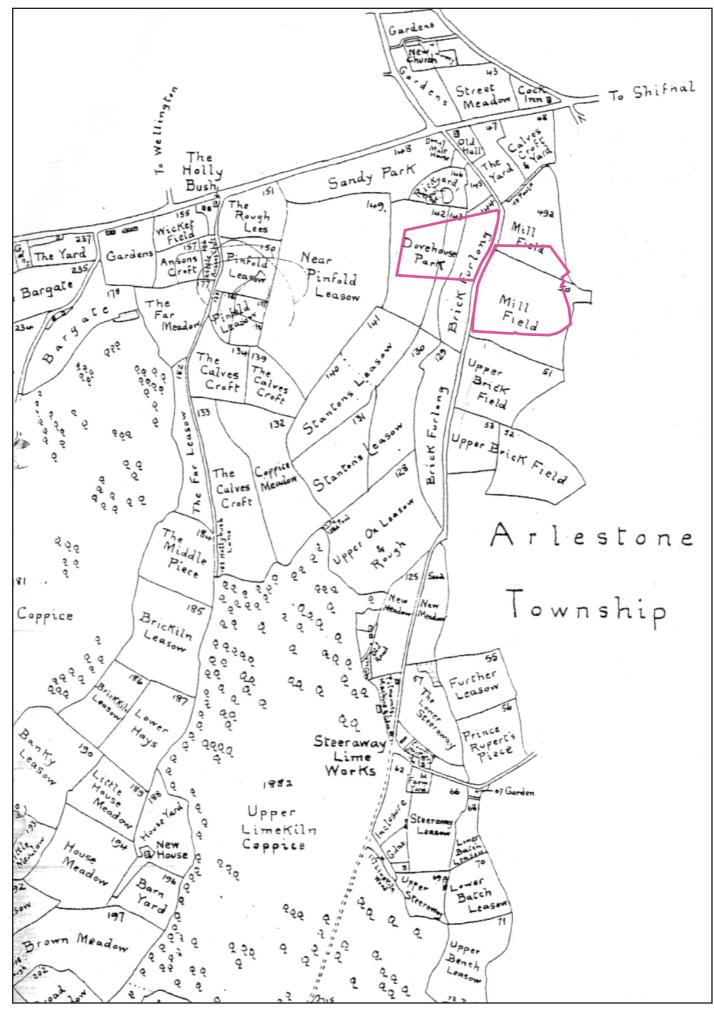
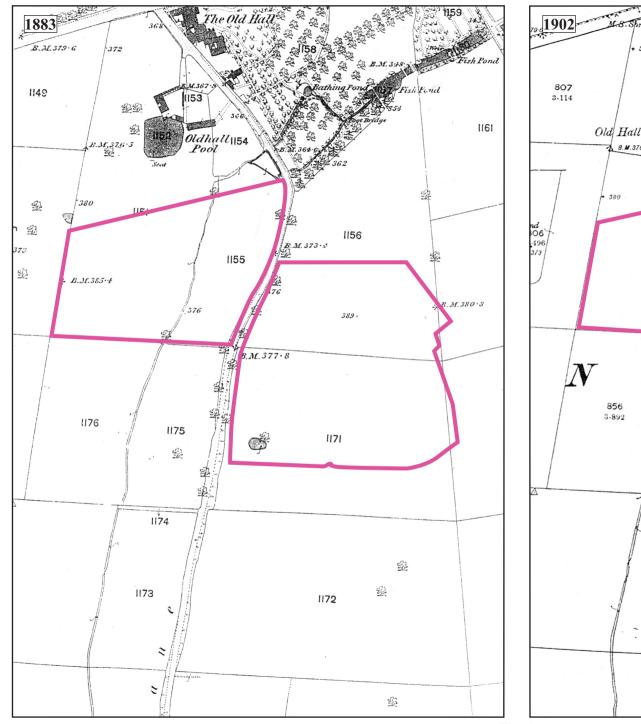


Fig.3



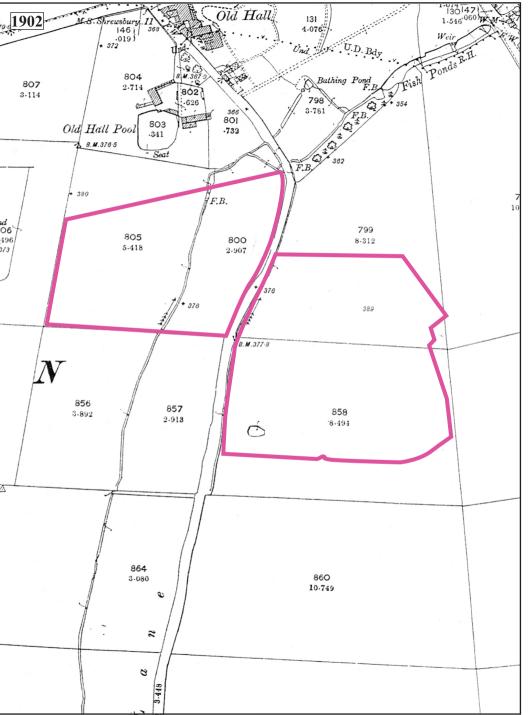
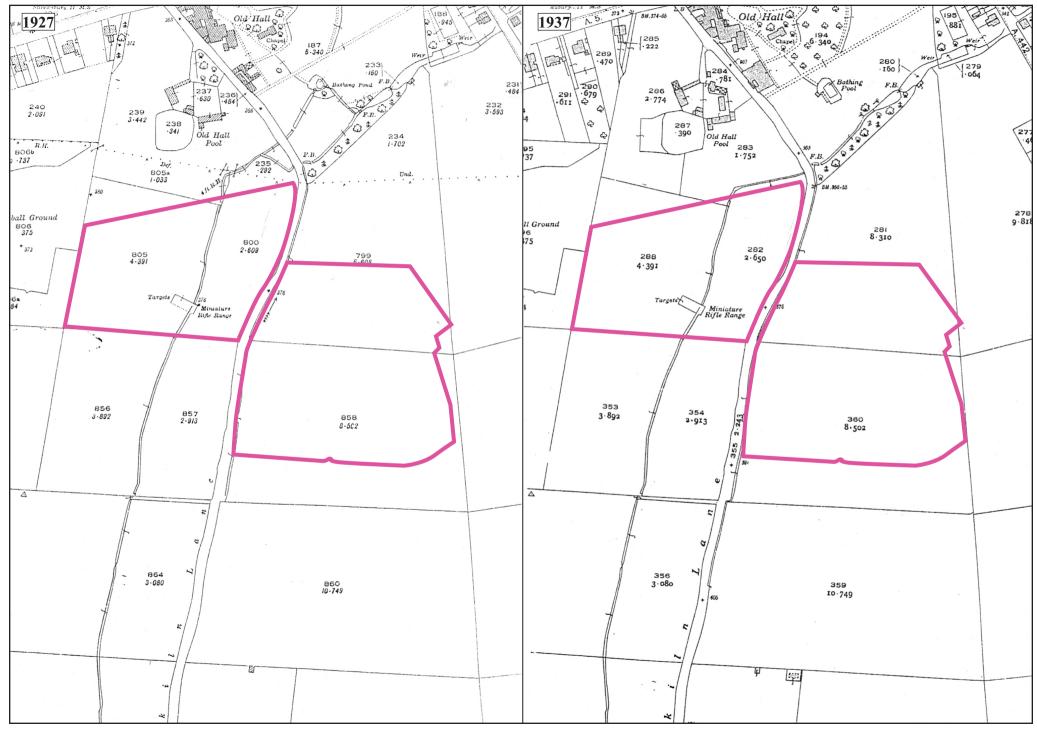


Fig.4



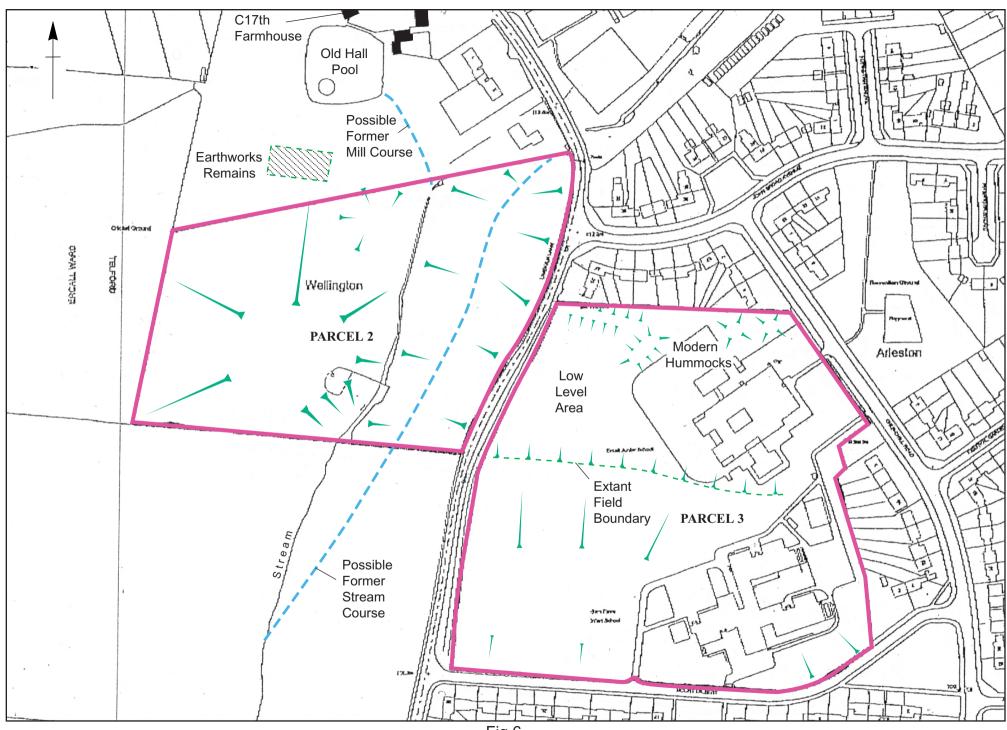


Fig.6



Plate 1



Plate 2



Plate 3







APPENDIX

Location

Various

SJ 6526 1153

SJ 6532 1136

SJ 6496 1160

SJ 6523 1166

SJ 6560 1102 SJ 6597 1109 SJ 6607 1108

SJ 6505 1131

SJ 6547 1140

SJ 6518 1098

SJ 6565 1099

SJ 6563 1089

SJ 6588 1105

SJ 6572 1096

SJ 6510 1084

SJ 6508 1084

SJ 6508 1084

SJ 6619 1053

SJ 6556 1119

SJ 6569 1116

SJ 6641 1061

SMR	Site Name	Туре	Date	Evidence
No.				
99	Watling Street, E. of Wroxeter	ROAD	Roman 43 -	Conjectural/
			409AD	Earthwork
506	86 Watling Street	SHOP	Early 19th - 20th	Documentary
708	Windmill W. side Mill Lane	WINDMILL	17th - mid-19th	Documentary
3888	Mill Yard, Arleston	WATERMILL	1500 - 1913AD	Documentary
5258	Pool (Site of) Rose Crescent	POND	1500 - 1913AD	Documentary
5261	Vicarage (site of) S. of	VICERAGE	1500 - 1913AD	Documentary
	Roseway			
5280	Tenement Plots N. of New St	TENEMENT	Med Early 20th	Documentary/
				Conjectual
5281	Tenement Plots S. of New St	TENEMENT	Med Early 20th	Documentary/
				Conjectual
5286	Street System, Wellington	ROAD	Med Early 20th	Documentary/
				Conjectual
5306	Post-med Urban Form,	TOWN	1500 - 1913AD	Conjectural
	Wellington			
7187	Shropshire Brewery	BREWERY	Early 19th - 20th	Documentary
7189	Malthouse	MALTHOUSE	1500 - 1913AD	Documentary
7190	Malthouse	MALTHOUSE	1500 - 1913AD	Building

CULVERT

TENEMENT

HOUSE

HALL

BARN

HOTEL

CHAPEL

FARM

HOUSE

HOUSE

TOLL HOUSE

CHURCH

TOWN HOUSE Early 19th

1500 - 1913AD

18th (1750 -

1799) 16th and later

17th

Unknown

Early 19th - 20th

Documentary

Documentary/

Conjectual

Building

Demolished

Demolished

Table 1. Sites and Monuments Records

	Table 2. Sites	and Monuments	Records of A	Archaeological	Events
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Event ID	Event Name	Date	Activity Type	Organization	Location
ESA3383	Evaluation of Proposed Dawley	1993-	Archaeological	Lancaster University	SJ 6623 0949
	Road Opencast Coal Site	1994	Evaluation	Field Archaeology	
ESA517	Photographic Survey	1976	Photographic	Shropshire County	SJ 6621 1108
			Survey	Council	

Ditch

Lane

Chapel 15092 No. 229 Holyhead Rd

15093 No 231 Holyhead Rd

15094 No 233 Holyhead Rd

15397 Arleston Toll House

17081 No.16 Mill Bank

17080 Christ Church, Mill Bank

17095 No 12 and Oak Beams, Toll Rd

Tenement Plots N. of New St

12991 Site of Priory, Holyhead Rd

13001 The Old Hall, Holyhead Rd

13007 Cock Hotel, Holyhead Rd

13002 Barn SW of Old Hall, Limekiln

Wellington (Private Chapel)

8058

14324