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Shenstone Park Farm,
Staffordshire

An Archaeological
Watching Brief 2008

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**Shenstone Park Farm, Staffordshire
An Archaeological Watching Brief 2008**

by

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**SHENSTONE PARK FARM, STAFFORDSHIRE
AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF, 2008**

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SUMMARY

Site Name: Shenstone Park Farm, Shenstone, Lichfield.
NGR: SK 1196 0361
Type: Watching brief
Date of fieldwork: 21/05/2008
Client: R and RW Bartlett

In May 2008 an archaeological watching brief was undertaken by Birmingham Archaeology at Shenstone Park Farm on behalf of R and RW Bartlett during groundworks associated with the erection of an extension to an existing agricultural building.

No archaeological features, structures, deposits or horizons were identified during the course of the groundworks. No stratified artefactual material predating the modern period was recovered, however seven sherds of pottery of late 19th/ early 20th century date were recovered as surface finds.

Ground levelling and the construction of large agricultural buildings on site appear to have removed all traces of any underlying archaeological deposits in this area.

SHENSTONE PARK FARM, STAFFORDSHIRE
AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF, 2008

1 INTRODUCTION

In May 2008 Birmingham Archaeology carried out an archaeological watching brief at Shenstone Park Farm (hereafter referred to as the site). The work was commissioned by Staffordshire County Council on behalf of R and RW Bartlett in advance of a proposed agricultural building development.

This report outlines the results of the archaeological monitoring, which was carried out in accordance with a brief and Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) produced by Staffordshire County Council. The project conformed to the Institute of Field Archaeologists' *Standard and Guidance for an Archaeological Watching Brief* (revised 2001).

2 LOCATION AND GEOLOGY

The site is located at Shenstone Park Farm, Park Lane, Shenstone, to the southeast of Shenstone village, Lichfield, Staffordshire, and is centred on NGR SK 1196 0361 (Fig. 1).

The underlying geology at Shenstone Park Farm consists of Bromsgrove sandstone formation, although to the north of the site lies superficial geology of glaciofluvial deposits of river gravels.

The present character of the site is modern hardcore material, probably used to build up and level off the existing ground surface.

3 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

The principal aim of the watching brief was to record any archaeological features, structures, deposits, or horizons exposed during intrusive groundworks across the site.

More specific aims were to:

- To ensure the archaeological monitoring of all aspects of the development programme likely to impact on archaeological remains related to medieval and post medieval development of the site.
- To secure the analysis, conservation and long term storage of any artefactual/ecofactual material recovered from the site.

4 METHODOLOGY

Groundworks comprised the excavation of footing pits using a mechanical excavator fitted with a toothed bucket. This was monitored by a suitably qualified archaeologist and complemented with the salvage recording of any archaeological deposits and features revealed during works.

All trenches were photographed using colour slide film and digital images and a scale plan drawn to show trench location.

The full site archive includes all artefactual remains recovered from the site. 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). The paper archive will be deposited with the appropriate repository subject to permission from the landowner.

5 ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL CONTEXT

The site lies to the northeast of a scheduled moat (SM 22437). Previous fieldwalking close to the farm recovered prehistoric worked flint, a Bronze Age flint axe and medieval pottery. The course of the Roman road Ryknield Street runs to the west of the site, and continues north to the remains of the Roman town of *Letocetum*, near Wall, Lichfield. A watching brief in the wider Shenstone Park area has also revealed evidence of a 16th/17th century ditch or pit which has been interpreted as representing occupation of a hunting lodge built by the Doyle family within Shenstone Park (Hancox 2004).

6 RESULTS

The groundworks consisted of the excavation of 24 footing trenches, most measuring 2 x 1.2 x 1m, although some extended to 2.2m in length and 1.5m in width. Depth varied only slightly, from 0.9m to 1.1m. Natural geology (Bromsgrove Sandstone Formation) was not identified in any of the footing trenches. Trenches 1-17, all at the northern end of the site, away from the moat, contained orange red or red brown clay sand overlain by dark brown clay sand which was sealed by brick rubble and hardcore. Trenches 18, 19 and 24, at the southern corner of the site, contained orange clay sand only; trench 18 was also truncated by a modern pipe trench backfilled with pea gravel. Trenches 20 and 21, to the southwest, were excavated through red brown clay sand, which was probably a natural colour variation of the orange sand in trenches 18, 19 and 24. Trenches 22 and 23, also to the southwest, contained red brown/brown clay sand overlain by brick rubble and hardcore material similar to trenches 1-17 (fig 3). For more detailed descriptions of all trenches please refer to Appendix 1.

No artefacts of medieval or post medieval date were identified in any of the trenches. Seven sherds of 19th/early 20th century pottery were recovered as unstratified surface finds near trenches 1-5.

7 CONCLUSION

Despite the potential of the development site, given its proximity to a scheduled ancient monument the watching brief identified no archaeological remains within the area. This may be due to previous groundworks removing any traces of existing archaeology, or the building up and levelling of the ground surface may simply have buried any archaeological remains more deeply underground than the current groundworks can identify.

8 ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The project was commissioned by Staffordshire County Council, on behalf of R and RW Bartlett. Thanks are due to Mr R Bartlett and Mr K Drakes for their co-operation and assistance throughout the project. Thanks also go to Stephen Dean [the County Archaeologist], who monitored the project on behalf of Staffordshire County Council. The fieldwork was undertaken

by Emily Hamilton, who also produced the written report. The report was illustrated by Nigel Dodds, and edited by Malcolm Hislop who managed the project for Birmingham Archaeology.

9 REFERENCES

Department of the Environment (DoE) 1990, *Planning Policy Guidance Note 16: Archaeology and Planning*.

Hancox, E 2004 *Shenstone Park, Shenstone Lane, Little Hay, Staffordshire: An Archaeological Watching Brief* (Birmingham Archaeology Report 1250).

Institute of Field Archaeologists 2001, *Standard and Guidance for an Archaeological Watching Brief*.

10 APPENDIX 1.

Footing Trench Descriptions

Trenches were numbered in the order of excavation. All trenches except 7, 8 and 24 were orientated NE-SW. Trenches 7 and 8 aligned SE-NW. Trench 24 aligned N-S.

Trench 1 (Plate 2)

Dark brown clay sand 0.75m deep overlain by brick rubble 0.15m deep and sealed by dark grey hardcore material 0.1m deep. Total trench depth 1.0m.

Trench 2 (Plates 1 & 2)

Dark brown clay sand 0.7m deep overlain by brick and tile rubble 0.15m deep sealed by dark grey hardcore material 0.1m deep. Total trench depth 0.95m.

Trench 3

Dark brown clay sand 0.75m deep overlain by brick rubble 0.15m deep and sealed by dark grey hardcore material 0.15m deep. Total trench depth 1.05m.

Trench 4 (Plate 3)

Dark brown clay sand 0.75m deep overlain by brick rubble 0.15m deep, sealed by dark grey hardcore material 0.1m deep. Total trench depth 1.0m.

Trench 5

Red orange clay sand 0.5m deep overlain by dark brown clay sand 0.25m deep. Sealed by bricks and hardcore mixture 0.15m deep. Total trench depth 0.9m.

Trench 6

Red orange clay sand 0.6m, overlain by 0.2m of dark brown clay sand and sealed by 0.15m of brick rubble and hardcore. Total depth 0.95m.

Trench 7

Red brown clay sand mixed with brick rubble 0.75m deep sealed by grey hardcore material 0.15m. Total depth 0.9m.

Trench 8 (Plate 4)

Orange clay sand 0.15m overlain by 0.5m of dark brown clay sand, sealed by 0.2m of brick rubble and 0.2m of grey hardcore material. Total depth 1.05m.

Trench 9

Yellow orange sand 0.4m deep sealed by grey hardcore material 0.5m deep. Total depth 0.9m.

Trench 10

Red clay sand 0.15m deep overlain by dark brown clay sand 0.15m deep and sealed by grey hardcore material 0.6m deep. Total depth 0.9m.

Trench 11

Red clay sand 0.2m sealed by dark brown sand 0.2m and overlain by 0.6m of grey hardcore material. Total depth 1.0m.

Trench 12

Dark brown clay sand 0.5m deep sealed by grey hardcore 0.5m deep. Total depth 1.0m.

Trench 13

Dark brown clay sand 0.5m deep sealed by grey hardcore 0.5m deep. Total depth 1.0m.

Trench 14 (Plate 5)

Dark brown clay sand 0.6m deep overlain by grey hardcore material 0.5m deep. Total depth 1.1m.

Trench 15 (Plate 9)

Dark brown clay sand 0.6m deep overlain by hardcore material 0.5m deep. Total depth 1.1m.

Trench 16

Dark brown clay sand 0.3m deep overlain by brick rubble 0.2m deep and sealed by 0.3m of hardcore and tarmac. Total depth 0.8m. Trench not as deep as the others due to proximity to buildings.

Trench 17

Dark brown clay sand 0.2m deep overlain by brick rubble 0.2m deep, sealed by 0.15m of hardcore and tarmac. Total depth 0.55m. Depth due to proximity to buildings and also concrete base of drain restricted the use of the machine so trench hand dug.

Trench 18

Soft orange clay sand 1.0m. Truncated by modern pipe trench backfilled with plastic pipes and pea gravel.

Trench 19 (Plate 6)

Soft orange clay sand 1.0m.

Trench 20 (Plate 7)

Red brown clay sand 1.0m.

Trench 21

Red brown clay sand 1.0m.

Trench 22 (Plate 8)

Red brown clay sand 0.45m deep sealed by 0.4m of light grey sandy overburden. Total depth 0.85m.

Trench 23

Mixed red brown and dark brown clay sand 0.5m deep sealed by 0.4m of light grey sandy overburden. Total depth 0.9m.

Trench 24

Orange clay sand 1.0m.

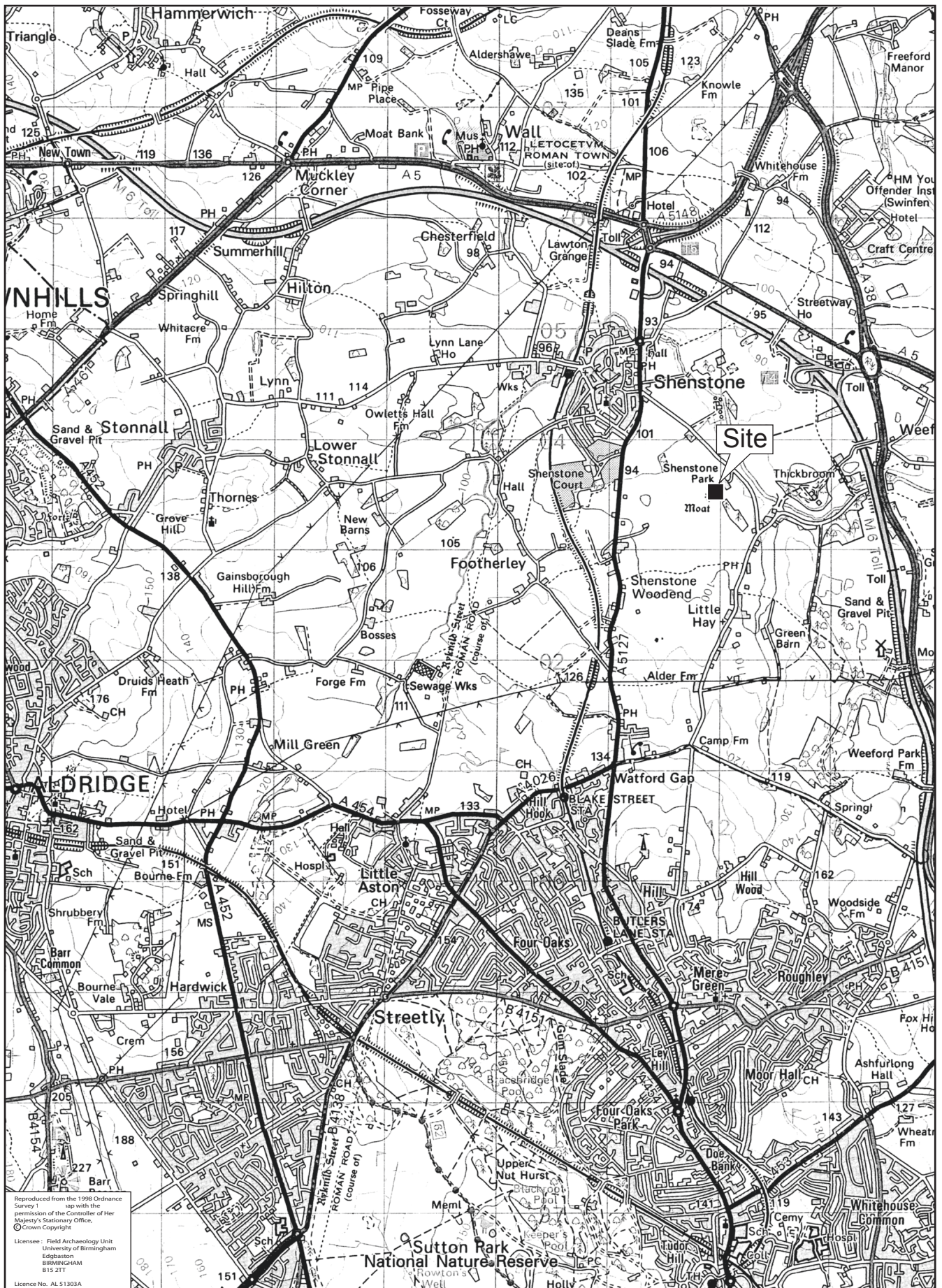


Fig.1 Site location



Fig.2 Area of observed groundworks

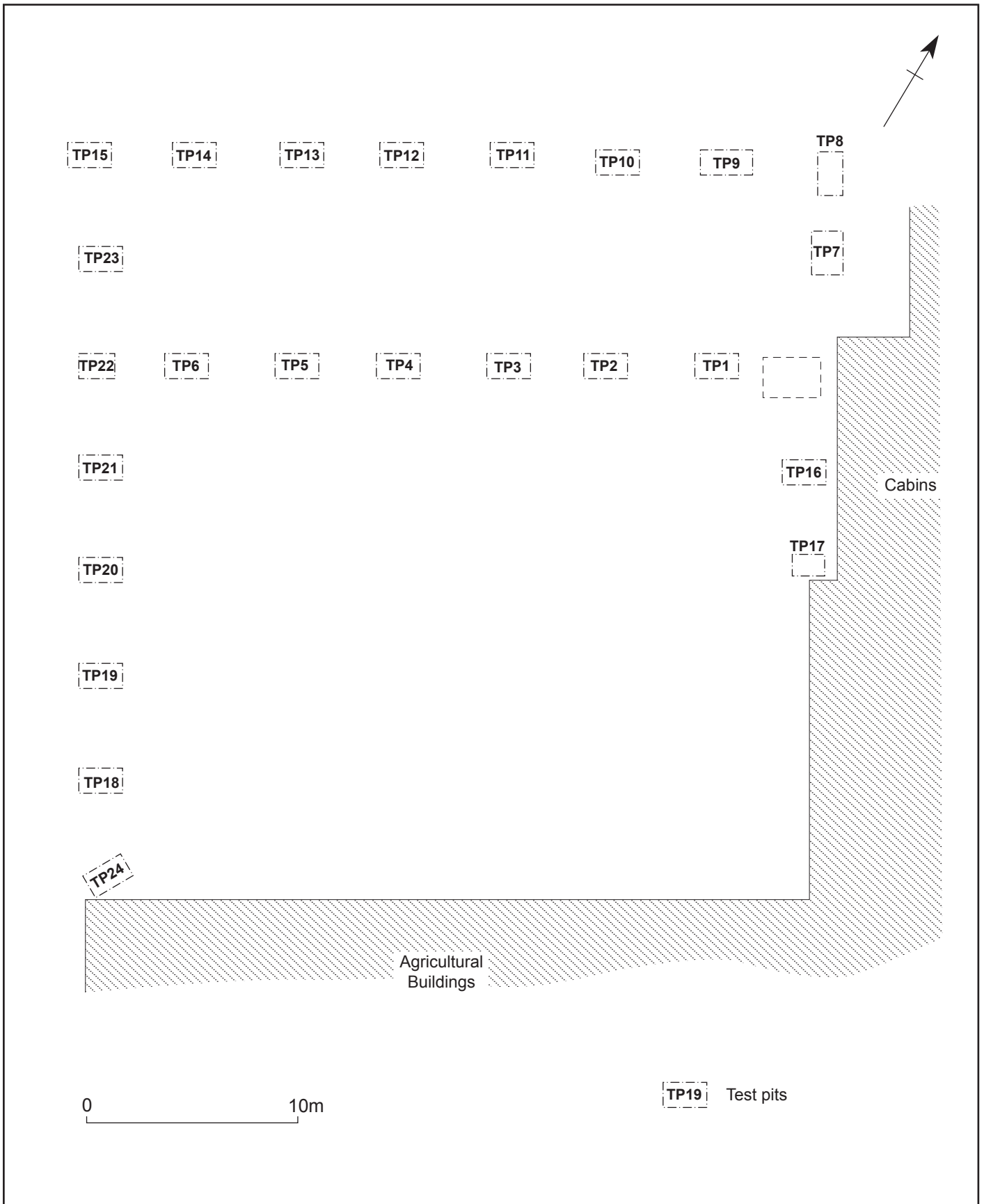


Fig.3 Trench location plan



Plate 1 Trench 2 from the south



Plate 2 Trenches 1-5 from the northeast



Plate 3 Trench 4 from the south



Plate 4 Trench 8 from the west



Plate 5 Trench 14 from the north



Plate 6 Trench 19 from the south



Plate 7 Trench 20 from the southeast

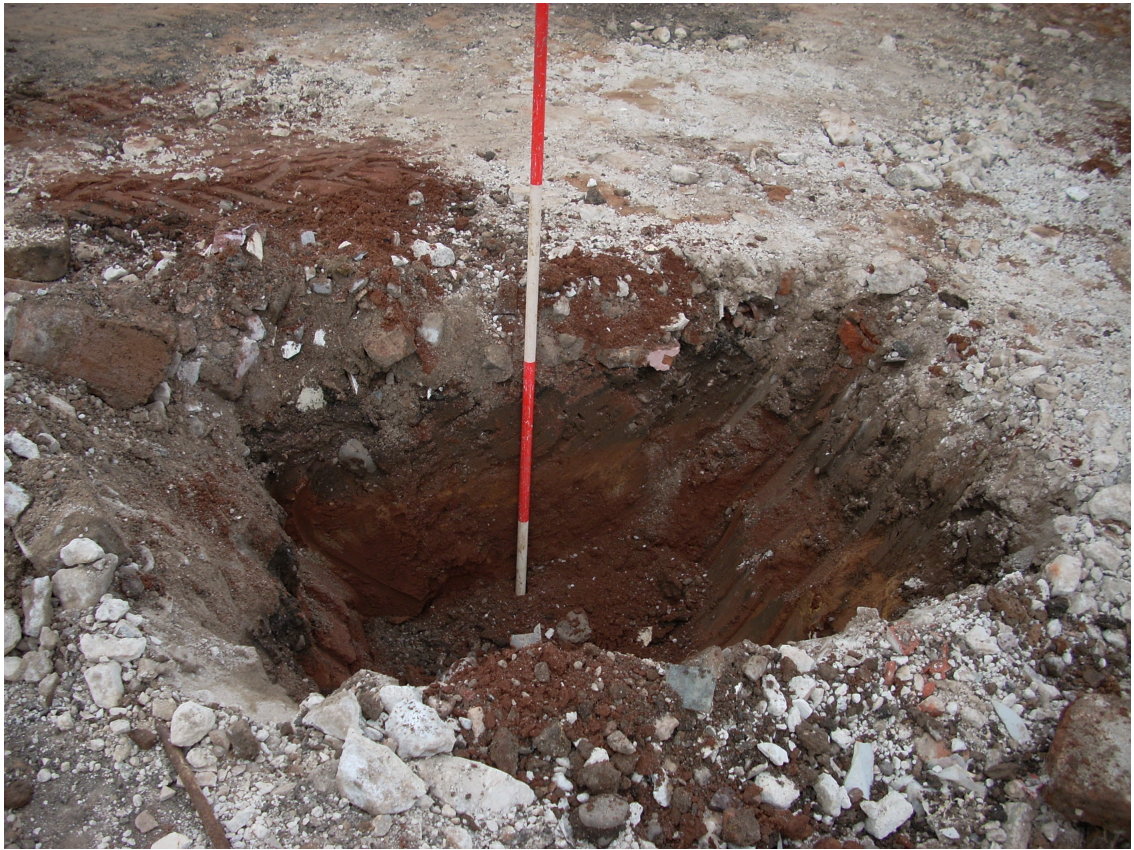


Plate 8 Trench 22 from the southeast



Plate 9 Trench 15 under excavation, from the north