



Hall's Croft, Old Town, Stratford-upon-Avon, Warwickshire.
Archaeological Desk Based Assessment and Evaluation 2012

Job no. 6245

Museum Code SBT2012-1



William Mitchell

Table of Contents

<i>SUMMARY</i>	5
1 INTRODUCTION	6
1.1 Background to the project	6
2 SITE LOCATION AND GEOLOGY	6
2.1 Site Location.....	6
2.2 Statutory Designations.....	6
2.3 Geology and Topography	6
3 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES	6
4 METHODOLOGY.....	7
4.1 Desk-Based Assessment	7
4.2 Historic Building Recording.....	7
4.3 Archaeological Evaluation	8
5 THE HISTORIC DEVELOPMENT OF HALL'S CROFT.....	9
5.1 Ownership Sequence of Hall's Croft.....	9
5.2 Construction Sequence of Hall's Croft.....	10
5.3 Brief Historical Outline of Hall's Croft.....	11
6 HISTORIC MAP REGRESSION AND PICTORIAL HISTORY.....	12
7 PREVIOUS ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND ARCHITECTURAL INVESTIGATIONS.....	17
7.1 Alcock and Meeson 1998.....	17
7.2 D W H Miles 1999	18
7.3 Warwickshire Museum Field Services 2006	18
7.4 Stratascan 2006.....	18
7.5 Oxford Archaeology 2007	18
7.6 Summary of Previous Archaeological and Architectural Investigations	19
8 EVALUATION RESULTS	20
8.1 Subsoil (Natural).....	20
8.2 Test Pit 1	20
8.3 Test Pit 2.....	21

8.4	Test Pit 3.....	22
8.5	Test Pit 4.....	22
8.6	Test Pit 5.....	23
8.6	Test Pit 6.....	24
8.7	Test Pit 7.....	24
8.8	Layers dating to the 1950-51 restoration	25
9	THE FINDS.....	25
9.1	The Pottery.....	25
9.2	Further discussion of layer 104	25
10	DISCUSSION.....	26
10.1	Phasing.....	26
10.2	Significance of the archaeological results.....	26
10.3	Recommendations and Potential.....	27
11	ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS.....	27
12	REFERENCES.....	27

Table of Plates

Plate 1:	Board of Health Map 1851.....	13
Plate 2:	1868 Sale Plan.....	14
Plate 3:	1st Edition Ordnance Survey Map 1885.....	14
Plate 4:	Hall's Croft Garden. Photograph, 1900	15
Plate 5:	Hall's Croft Garden. H E Forrest, 1925	15
Plate 6:	Hall's Croft Garden. Mrs Male, c. late 19th Century.....	16
Plate 7:	Hall's Croft. R B Wheeler, c 1800-20	16
Plate 8:	Hall's Croft. During restoration 1950	17
Plate 9:	Location of the Test Pits	20
Plate 10:	Test Pit 1. Looking South.....	21
Plate 11:	Test Pit 2. Post hole [203]. Looking West.	21
Plate 12:	Test Pit 3. Pipe trench [303]. Looking West.....	22

Plate 13: Test Pit 4. Looking West 23

Plate 14: Test Pit 5. Metalled Surface 508. Looking West 23

Plate 15: Test Pits 6 & 7. Post hole [612] and pit [614]. Looking North..... 24

Table of Figures

Figure 1: Site Location Plan.....30

Figure 2: Trench Location Plan.....31

Figure 3: Building Phase Plan.....32

Figure 4: Location of previous archaeological investigations.....33

Figure 5:Test Pit 5 Plan & Section.....34

Figure 6:Test Pit 6 Plan & Section.....35

SUMMARY

In December 2011 and January 2012, the Shakespeare Birthplace Trust carried out an Archaeological Desk Based Assessment and Evaluation at Hall's Croft in Stratford-upon-Avon, Warwickshire (NGR SP 202 546), in advance of essential structural repairs.

The conservation programme consisted of essential structural repairs to the superstructure of the building. These structural repairs were composed of several elements, including; propping of a failing timber jetty, re-routing of external drainage and strengthening of ceiling and roof timbers among others. As part of listed building consent, archaeological investigation and building recording has been carried out prior to this work being done. There has been a limited amount of work on the property and garden since it was acquired and restored by the trust in 1949-51.

The Desk Based Assessment was able to evaluate and summarise the known documentary history, previous archaeological and architectural history of the house and site. An architectural survey and history followed by a tree ring survey was carried out in 1998. This confirmed eight phases of construction beginning in 1613 and the likely-hood that an earlier building stood to the south of the site. The accompanying historical research debated the ownership and development of the house. Limited archaeological observations, geophysical surveys and evaluations were carried out in 2006 and 2007. These identified; tentative evidence of a demolished medieval building in the vicinity, located along the north east of the garden (roof tile demolition rubble) and there was clear evidence of a build up of garden soils originating in the 13th – 14th and continuing into the 19th centuries.

The results of the archaeological investigations were significant. A layer (or pit) was identified beneath the kitchen/ stable/ hayloft block erected in c.1631 (tree ring date). This layer contained late 16th-early 17th century local pottery (midlands yellow ware and black wares) which is probably contemporary with the first phase of building (and therefore the first occupants Dr John Hall and Susanna Shakespeare). Also within this layer was a dress pin and a large amount of horn-cores. These may represent the remains of butchery waste, horn-working or leather-working. Layers relating to the construction of the house in the early 17th century also survive.

A metalled (cobbled) surface, post-hole, pits (including a possible beam-slot) and an occupation layer, were datable to the early 13th century (1200-1225). Stone roof tiles and a fragment of moulded stone work were also recovered. These features and artefacts provide strong supporting evidence of occupation and the presence of a building(s) which was located on the site prior to the construction of Hall's Croft.

It is clear that the extensive renovations of the 1950s did not affect the below ground archaeology to any great extent. Archaeological features which add to the documentary history of the site were found within a relatively small excavation area. The original levelling and construction layers of Hall's Croft survive, along with evidence of occupation from earlier periods. This work has highlighted the potential of future conservation projects to contribute to the history and interpretation of the SBT properties.

Hall's Croft, Old Town, Stratford-upon-Avon, Warwickshire.

Archaeological Desk Based Assessment and Evaluation 2012



Job no. 6245

Museum Code SBT2012-1

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background to the project

In December 2011 and January 2012 the Shakespeare Birthplace Trust carried out archaeological investigations at Grade I listed Hall's Croft, in Old Town, Stratford upon Avon. This document outlines the archaeological work undertaken and provides recommendations for further work and interpretation of the site.

2 SITE LOCATION AND GEOLOGY

2.1 Site Location

Hall's Croft is located at the corner of Church Street and Old Town close to Holy Trinity Church on the south side of Stratford (*NGR SP 202 546*). The frontage of the south elevation faces directly onto Old Town pavement and the Church Street end of the site are located within the borough of New Stratford, the house and most of the plot are however, located within Old Stratford, the borough boundary runs diagonally through the garden (**Figure 1**).

2.2 Statutory Designations

The present character of the site is formal gardens with associated features. Hall's Croft is a grade I listed building (LB) and is located within the Stratford-upon-Avon Conservation Area (CA).

2.3 Geology and Topography

The underlying geology of Stratford-upon-Avon comprises bedrock consisting of West Mercian Mudstone which is overlaid by Wasperton sand and gravel of the Warwickshire Avon Valley Formation (British Geological Survey). The ground today is level, the front garden and paving surrounding the house are level with the street and the rear of the garden is terraced into a slight natural slope to the north.

3 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

The principle aim of the 2011 and 2012 fieldwork was to investigate the buried and standing archaeological remains at Hall's Croft and to relate this information where possible to the owners of the house at a particular period, Dr John Hall and Susanna Shakespeare. Archaeological excavation provided

the opportunity to evaluate the below ground archaeology and inform future conservation work in the area, and provided an additional visitor experience for the Trust.

More specific aims were to:

- Investigate the presence and survival of structural remains and across the site and produce a chronology of the built remains which are encountered.
- Investigate the presence and survival of preserved deposits across the site and to recover artefactual remains.
- With the Shakespeare Birthplace Trust, integrate this project into a wider remit for education and tourism of Hall's Croft, the local area, and the region.
- Assess the previous site research (archaeological, architectural and documentary) and provide an accessible summary of these results.

4 METHODOLOGY

4.1 Desk-Based Assessment

A document detailing the known background of previous building investigations and archaeological works undertaken at Hall's Croft was beneficial to the interpretation and future work on the site. The overall aim was to provide an assessment of the significance of Hall's Croft and provide an accessible summary of these results.

Research was carried out principally within the Shakespeare Birthplace Trust Library and Archives.

4.2 Historic Building Recording

Elements of the building conservation programme required a small scale building record. Owing to the temporary and reversible nature of the works, a lower level building record was required. A basic photographic record and description of the effected structural elements (English Heritage Building Recording Level 1/2) was produced.

The structural elements included in the photographic recording process were all original building fabric. Record shots of the effected internal rooms and the conservation process was also produced, which will provide a useful source for future conservation programmes.

The recorded structural elements included:

- The existing failing framing members (covered during the conservation process by oak cover plates),
- The areas of floor boards which required removal prior to the insertion of the floor cleats,
- The attic space prior to insulation and work above the lime ash ceilings (which were renewed).

Recommendations by Dr N.W Alcock and R.A Meeson in June 1998 clarified the need for an awareness of the need for proper recording prior to any conservation work;

'No structural changes or conservation work should be undertaken without first seeking appropriate advice upon the implications for the historic fabric. No such works should be contemplated without simultaneously considering the need for a recording element to be carried out in tandem by an appropriately qualified buildings archaeologist. Even some minor works present an opportunity to place on record more information about the building, and cumulatively they may alter its character'. (Alcock and Meeson 1998, 31)

The recorded structural elements are stored digitally and there are copies within the written archive. They can be accessed at the Shakespeare Birthplace Trust Archives

4.3 Archaeological Evaluation

The archaeological consisted of two different elements;

1. *The excavation of the location of concrete pad stones.*

Construction of the concrete pad stones for the jetty props, required seven hand excavated test pits for the 1 cu m foundations. The excavated soil was removed to a skip (**Figure 2**).

2. *The excavation of a re-routed drainage trench.*

The proposed below ground drainage route required hand excavation by an archaeologist. This consisted of a small extension excavated to maximum depth of 0.3m below ground level adjacent to test pits 6 and 7. The nature, direction and depth was clarified by the contractor prior to work beginning. Excavated soil was removed to a skip

All excavation was completed by hand by the archaeologist. Further tidying up excavation and filling in works undertaken by the contractor was considered for watching brief.

The excavated spoil was stored on site in skips, and removed by the building contractor upon completion. This area was selected and cordoned off prior to the commencement of the fieldwork by the Shakespeare Birthplace Trust. Safe access routes for spoil movement were implemented prior to project start.

Any archaeological features exposed were recorded by written description, drawing and photography. All stratigraphic sequences were recorded, even where no archaeology was present. Features were planned at a scale of 1:20 or 1:50, and sections were drawn of 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 cards. Written records and scale plans were supplemented by photographs using digital SLR photography. All archive material, including written records, digital photographs and artefacts will be archived at the Shakespeare Birthplace Trust Archives.

Recovered finds were cleaned, marked and remedial conservation work was undertaken as necessary. Treatment of all finds conformed to guidance contained within First Aid for Finds (Watkinson and Neal 1998).

One deposit was sampled for retrieval and assessment of the preservation conditions and potential for analysis of biological remains. The environmental sampling policy will follow the guidelines contained in *Environmental Archaeology: a guide to the theory and practice of methods, from sampling and recovery to post-excavation* (English Heritage 2002).

5 THE HISTORIC DEVELOPMENT OF HALL'S CROFT

Significant dates relating to the construction, ownership and evolution of Hall's Croft are outlined below;

5.1 Ownership Sequence of Hall's Croft

- 1613** Construction of Halls Croft. Ownership or occupancy by Dr John Hall (married Susanna Shakespeare in 1607, and moved to New Place in 1616) (Nb; Dr John Hall's association with the building is not directly recorded, but is based upon the deduction that Hall lived in Old Town before moving to New Place).
- 1616-1627** Unknown history.
- 1627-1712** Ownership of the Smith family. Richard Smith 1627-32 (First firm evidence for ownership traced back to this date- paid 10s 2d chief rent for a property in Old Town). Anthony Smith 1635-46, Henry Smith 1646-87, Richard Smith 1687-c1691, William Smith 1691-1708, Isaac Smith 1708-12.
- 1712-32** Ownership of Thomas Woolmer (Earliest surviving title deed for the Hall's Croft property- 15th November 1712).
- 1732-1760** Ownership of the Makepeace family. William Makepeace 1732-39, Katherine Makepeace 1739-60.
- 1760-1830** Ownership of the Wigley family. Edmund Wigley 1760-66, Henry Wigley 1766-1801, Edmund Meysey Wigley 1802-30.
- 1830-32** Ownership of Thomas Umbers.
- 1833-68** Ownership of Thomas Umbers 1833-55 (executors 1855-68).
- 1850-1883** *Part of the house used as a school.*
- 1869-93** Ownership of the Lane family. John Lane 1869-83, Harriet Lane 1883-93.
- c.1885- 1913** Ownership of Catherine Croker.
- 1899** *Occupied by Marie Corelli (Novelist), for a few months.*
- 1913-1943** Ownership of Josephine Macleod.

1943-45 Ownership of the Countess of Sandwich (Josephine Macleod's niece).

1945-49 Ownership of Lady Elizabeth Montagu.

1949 Acquired by the Shakespeare Birthplace Trust.

1949-51 *Shakespeare Birthplace Trust restoration project.*

More information is available in 'Hall's Croft' 1998, R Bearman unpublished.

5.2 Construction Sequence of Hall's Croft

The table below represents the work of N W Alcock R A Meeson (1998). It is an amalgamation of the building construction sequences put together by the authors and the Tree- Ring Dating by D W H Miles. The Tree- ring dating was undertaken the year after the main structural analysis and it was able to provide more accurate dating of the separate units within the house. Stages C and D have been switched from the original analysis as result of this clearer dating.

More information is available in '*Hall's Croft Stratford-upon-Avon. An architectural survey and history. 1998. N W Alcock and R A Meeson*' and '*The Tree-Ring Dating of Hall's Croft, Stratford-upon-Avon, Warwickshire. 1999. D W H Miles*'.

Please refer to **Figure 3** for the location and phasing of the units.

STAGE	DATE	CONSTRUCTION
A	1613 (Tree Ring Date)	Unit I including central stair and fireplace(s): adjoins earlier structure on site of Unit III. Possibly also unit II or a structure on its site. <i>Primary phase of construction. 'Fourteen precise felling dates all for the same felling period of winter 1612/13 suggests the timbers were cut specifically for the construction of the building....during the summer and autumn of 1613' (Miles 1999)</i>
B	1614 (Tree Ring Date)	Unit II with stair and chimneys (fireplaces F1-F8). May be virtually the same date as phase A. (Felling date of a single joist - winter 1613/14).
C	1620's (Approx Date)	New roof; Small stair adjoining F6 inserted.
D	1631 (Tree Ring Date)	Unit V: Detached single storey kitchen, stable and hayloft.
E	1653-1678 (Tree-Ring Date)	Unit IV added for main stair; Unit V reconstructed for ground floor kitchen and service; first floor chambers and fireplace (F9).
F	1670-80 (Approx Date)	Unit III reconstructed. New staircase in unit IV. Addition of Unit VI providing further service and an extra chamber. Corridor adjoining room 22 constructed. Gable added to room 21.
G	1700-20 (Approx Date)	Addition of bay windows to units I,III and V; Unit IVa added.
H	1865 (Documentary Date)	Addition of School Room and Ante Room. (Units VII and VIII)

5.3 Brief Historical Outline of Hall's Croft

The history of Hall's Croft can be traced back to 1627 when it was owned by Richard Smith. Smith paid 10s 2d chief rent for a property in Old Town (Hall's Croft through a process of deduction). The house passed through his descendents to Thomas Woolmer in 1712, the earliest surviving title deed to Hall's Croft is dated 15th November 1712. The Owners from this period onward are fully recorded (see 5.1).

The tradition that Dr John Hall owned the house after settling in Old Town in the early 17th century is first recorded in printed form in J.O Halliwell's *History of New Place*. Next to an illustration of Hall's Croft, Halliwell wrote; *'this is assigned as his residence solely by conjecture, not, however, an unlikely one, for the choice is limited to two or three sites'*. The origin of this tradition may have come from R.B Wheeler *'I have seen in some old papers relating to the town the Dr Hall resided in that part of Old Town which is in the parish of Old Stratford. His house in Old Town I know not'*.

There are only five candidates for his house; the college, the Dower house (present Avon Croft and Old Town Croft), St Marys (later Avon Bank), no 6 and Hall's Croft. Of these Hall's Croft has the greatest

likelihood of belonging to Hall, the others being ruled out through confirmed ownership (R.Bearman, 1998, unpublished).

Dr John Hall married Susanna Shakespeare in 1607 aged 32. Halls casebook confirms him to have been practicing in the area from at least 1611 (J. Lane research) and being newly married man establishing a medical practice he may have rented a house rather than bought one, perhaps explaining his absence from the records. It is worth noting though that, John Hall and Susanna must have lived elsewhere from 1607 until 1613 when Hall's Croft is known to have been constructed (Tree ring data). John Hall and Susanna are known to have moved to New Place with Anne Shakespeare in 1616, making their occupancy of Hall's Croft a maximum of 3 years. (R.Bearman, 1998, unpublished).

The 18th century history of Hall's Croft is well known (see 5.1). It was owned and occupied by the Smith, Woolmer, Makepeace and Wigley families before passing to Thomas Umbers in the early 19th century. Part of the house was used as a school from 1850 to 1883 and some of the buildings were adapted and extended for this purpose. The house acquired the name of Halls' Croft during the ownership of Lane family between 1869 and 1885 and was named by one of the tenants, Catherine Frances Croker, presumably as a result of Halliwell's investigations. Prior to this it was known as Cambridge house (Alcock and Meeson 1998, 6).

It became a private residence again after this period until it was acquired by the Shakespeare Birthplace Trust in 1949 for £11,000 (Fox 1989, 110).

6 HISTORIC MAP REGRESSION AND PICTORIAL HISTORY

The earliest dated plan of the site available is the 1851 Board of Health map (**Plate 1**). This shows Hall's Croft much as it is today with a large trapezoidal shaped garden located to the north of the house. The northern part of the garden is shown to consist of an open area (lawn?) surrounded by trees/shrubs. The present mulberry tree is in existence. South of this is a formally laid out garden with parallel garden paths and a scatter of trees. A large amount of tree/shrub coverage is present immediately to the rear of the property, these are edged by curving garden paths.

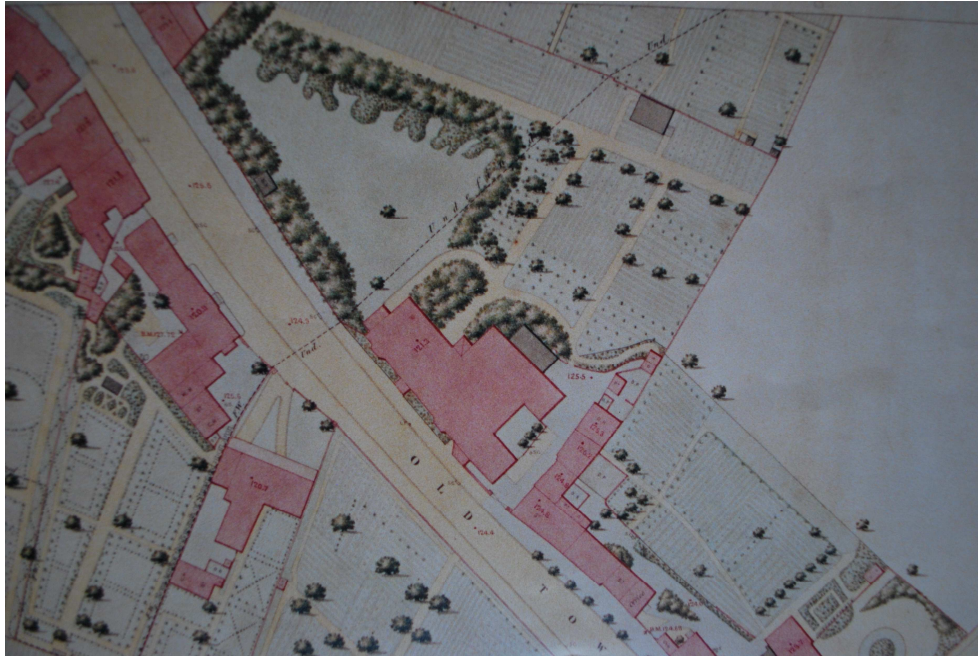


Plate 1: Board of Health Map 1851

The house itself appears much as it is today. There is evidence of an extension to the building to the south and a small addition to the north which became altered by the time of the 1868 sale plan. The southern boundary wall of Hall's Croft is a direct continuation of the rear boundary of the burgage plots in Church Street to the north. The slightly curving nature of the wall as it reaches Old Town may be as a result of this being a preserved medieval strip alignment from before the tenements of the street were laid out. The borough boundary is marked, running diagonally through the garden from this 1851 Board of Health map onwards.

In a surviving sale plan of 1868 (SBTRO DR231/14) (**Plate 2**) the property is known as Cambridge House and alterations to the building structure are noted, primarily to the part of the building known as the 'school room'. Other room usages are marked on the plan. The presence of a wall (unmarked on the 1851 map), running parallel to the southern boundary, may indicate the unproven presence of a former narrow tenement plot.

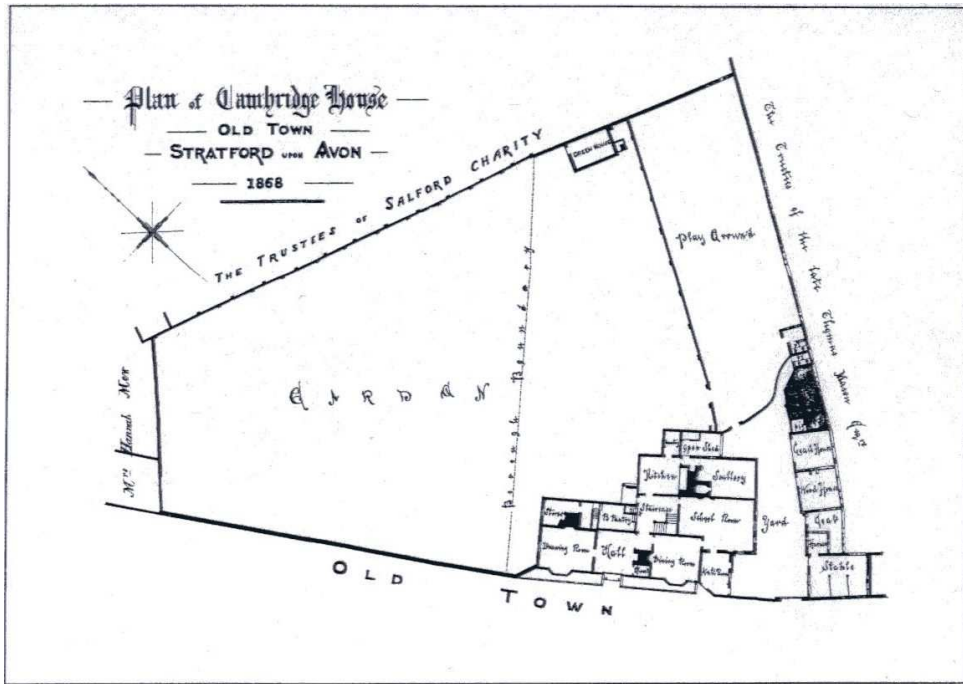


Plate 2: 1868 Sale Plan

The first edition Ordnance Survey map of 1885 (**Plate 3**) shows that the property was re-named Hall's Croft by this date. Much remained the same as the earlier mapping, albeit the removal of a line of trees, which were replaced by an additional pathway. The formal gardens to the south are not as accurately depicted as in the 1851 map.

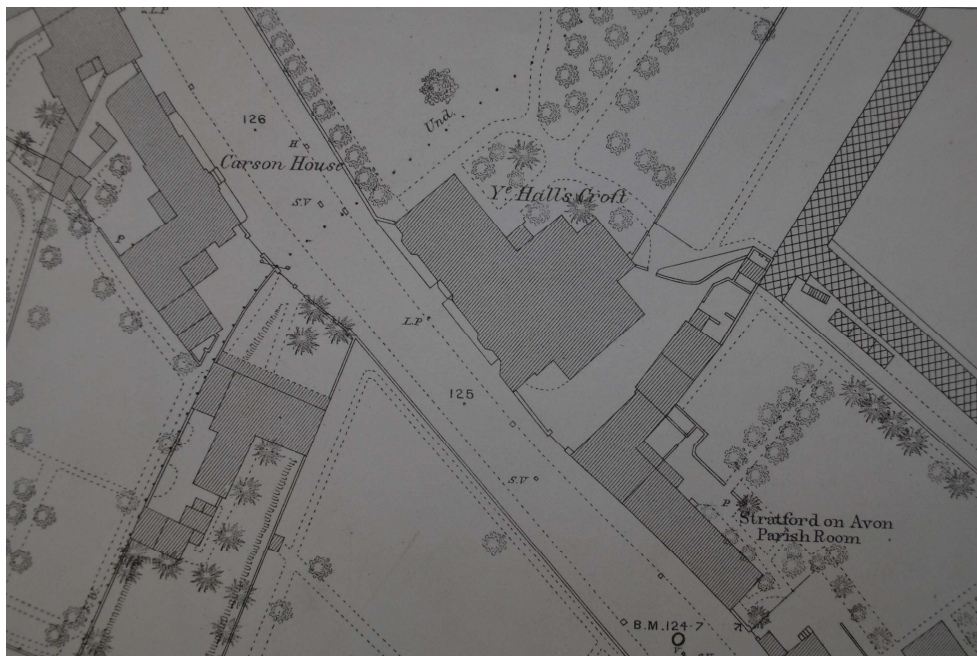


Plate 3: 1st Edition Ordnance Survey Map 1885

The Ordnance survey maps from the latter period of the site history up to the present day show the continued usage of the garden as open ground surrounded by trees and boundary walls. The building gained an eastern extension between 1914 and 1938 but otherwise remained unchanged.

The earliest photograph surviving of the garden and rear of the property is from 1900, this clearly shows a garden covered by a miscellany of vegetation (**Plate 4**), paintings from the late 19th and early 20th century support this (**Plates 5 & 6**).



Plate 4: Hall's Croft Garden. Photograph, 1900



Plate 5: Hall's Croft Garden. H E Forrest, 1925



Plate 6: Hall's Croft Garden. Mrs Male, c. late 19th Century

The next most significant alterations occurred during 1950 and 1951 after the purchase and restoration of the property by the Shakespeare Birthplace Trust. As a result of this, the garden was once again formalised and was '*rescued from its neglected state and completely re-designed on the lines of an old English garden*' (Fox 1997, 112). Pathways and borders were realigned and many of the larger trees were removed.

Many of the later alterations were taken away and the house was restored back as closely as possible to its original late 17th century state. A comparison of the earliest known photograph of the house (c. 1864) (**Plate 7**) and the house after its restoration in 1951 (**Plate 8**) reveal the extent of the alterations, which were comprehensively researched before restoration commenced. These restorations are well documented (SBT archives, Fox 1997).



Plate 7: Hall's Croft. R B Wheeler, c 1800-20



Plate 8: Hall's Croft. During restoration 1950

7 PREVIOUS ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND ARCHITECTURAL INVESTIGATIONS

There has been very little archaeological work within this area of Stratford-upon-Avon and archaeological excavations are generally under-represented in the town. There have however, been several investigations of the Hall's Croft property (including an architectural survey of the buildings and geophysical and archaeological investigations of the gardens) in the past 15 years. The results of these are summarised below. The full reports can be accessed at the Shakespeare Birthplace Trust Library and Archives.

7.1 Alcock and Meeson 1998

Architectural survey and history

Hall's Croft contains many original structural features which have enabled a comprehensive history of the building to be produced. Broadly, the house was constructed and altered over 8 phases, beginning in the early 17th century and continuing until the mid 19th century.

The earliest phase was the construction of the main building (Unit I) in 1613. This was followed soon after (1614) by the addition of a second range of rooms (Unit II). It is likely that this addition was always intended and construction occurred at the next most convenient time (Nb. An earlier building which originally attached to the main building, stood on the site of Unit III until its reconstruction in 1670-80). A new roof constructed over Units I and III created an enlarged attic space. The attic would have been large enough for the storage of goods making its building by a merchant likely. The construction in 1631 of a detached single storey kitchen, stable and hayloft (Unit V) was next in the sequence. Later in the century this became two stories. Between 1653-1678 the main staircase hall (Unit IV) was constructed to amalgamate the ranges (I,II and V) and provide easier access to the new floor in Unit V. The next major construction phase occurred in approximately 1670-80 when Unit III was reconstructed and Unit VI was

added providing more service spaces and chambers above. Later reconstructions in 1700-1720 consisted of the addition of bay windows and arched ceiling in Unit III. Several of the outbuildings date to the later 18th century. Around 1868 a room built for the purpose of being a schoolroom (Unit VII) and anteroom were constructed (Unit VIII). Further alterations, too numerous to mention, occurred in the later 19th and 20th centuries (**Figure 3**).

The results of this architectural survey are summarised in table form above (Section 5.2) and full interpretations are available in 'Hall's Croft Stratford-upon-Avon. An architectural survey and history. 1998. N W Alcock and R A Meeson'.

7.2 D W H Miles 1999

Tree-Ring Dating

During the standard architectural analysis there were problems of interpretation relating to the dating of specific structural elements. A programme of dendrochronological analysis was undertaken to provide absolute dating for major sections of the structure. This dating technique clarified the architectural survey phasing and the sequence of building is now clearer. The results of the tree-ring dating have been incorporated into the descriptions above (5.2 and 7.1).

7.3 Warwickshire Museum Field Services 2006

Archaeological Observation

An archaeological observation was undertaken during the rebuilding of the northern boundary wall at Hall's Croft as a requirement of planning permission (**Figure 4**). The foundation trench for the new wall was between 0.8m and 1.25m wide, 33.3m long and up to 1m in depth. The natural subsoil (sand and gravels) was located at 1.7m below ground level. One small rectangular, rubbish pit dated to the 17th – 18th century was identified. The overlying layers were mixed garden soils. The construction cut for the previous wall identified. There was wall at his location since at least the mid 19th century. (Warwickshire Museum Field Services June 2006)

7.4 Stratascan 2006

Geophysical Survey (Smalley 2006)

A geophysical survey was undertaken for the purpose of research, to locate any potential anomalies that may have been of archaeological significance. The survey covered approximately 2084m² of lawn and flower beds. It did not extend to the area immediately surrounding the house covered by paving slabs. A number of anomalies possible archaeological origin were located, but no clear pattern emerged. The high resistance linear anomalies thought to be potentially related to structural remains or compacted earth were investigated by Oxford Archaeology in 2007 (see below 7.5).

7.5 Oxford Archaeology 2007

Archaeological Evaluation and Historic Building Recording

An archaeological field evaluation and localised building recording exercise was undertaken for the purpose of research, in advance of plans to enhance the presentation of the site. Three test pits were excavated in the garden (**Figure 4**), these targeted anomalies identified in the geophysical survey (Stratascan, Smalley 2006). The building survey was located within the attic and consisted of the examination of a grinding machine fixed to a roof timber.

Test pit 1 was located over a high resistance anomaly on the south side of the property near to the Old Town boundary. The test pit was 2m x 2m and natural subsoil (sand and gravels) was revealed at depth of 0.9m below the present ground surface. A 13th - 14th century circular rubbish pit or garden planting feature was identified beneath securely stratified 14th - 18th century garden soil layers.

Test pit 2 was in the central area of the Hall's Croft garden across a high resistance linear anomaly. The test pit was 2m x 1m and natural subsoil was revealed at a depth of 0.7m below the present ground surface. No features were observed. There were securely stratified 14th - 18th century garden soil layers throughout the test pit.

Test pit 3 was located partly over a high resistance anomaly in the northern part of the garden. The test pit was 2m x 1m and natural subsoil was revealed at a depth of 0.7m below the present ground surface. Overlying the natural was a 13th-14th century layer containing roof tile rubble. Again, no features were observed. There were securely stratified 14th - 18th century garden soil layers throughout the test pit.

The examination of a tool attached to a roof timber in the attic of Hall's Croft led to the interpretation of a grinding machine. This tool was not located in its original location and dating remained uncertain. Further investigation beneath present floorboards revealed an earlier floor surface, from which an organic deposit was recovered. Environmental analysis of these samples revealed evidence for the storage and preparation of vegetables and fruit, likely dating to the Victorian period, but possibly accumulating over a longer period. Common oat, broad bean, garden pea, onion, apple/pear, walnut and weed seeds were all present.

It was proven unlikely that these crops were associated with the grinder and considered likely that the attic was used for drying or storing these crops before use.

(Oxford Archaeology 2007)

7.6 Summary of Previous Archaeological and Architectural Investigations

The previous archaeological investigations have not revealed many features of interest, however only a small sample of the garden has been excavated. Two pits have been identified, and there was tentative evidence of a demolished medieval building in the vicinity located along the north east of the garden (roof tile demolition rubble). There was clear evidence of a build up of garden soils originating in the 13th - 14th and continuing into the 19th centuries. The absence of archaeological features from within the garden make it likely that this area was not built up either in the medieval period or later.

The architectural analysis of Hall's Croft has provided confirmation of the historical development. A combination of absolute dating and structural analysis has given a detailed sequence of construction, including the dates of these phases. Eight phases exist, beginning in the early 17th century and continuing until the mid-19th century. The primary phase of construction was in 1613, and buildings were likely to have existed on the site prior to this. There were major developments to the building throughout the 17th century. It is hoped that further archaeological work on the site will contribute to the known development of the house and the site.

8 EVALUATION RESULTS

Seven test pits were excavated at the rear of the property. These were located beneath the east facing jetty within the paved garden area (**Plate 9**).



Plate 9: Location of the Test Pits

8.1 Subsoil (Natural)

The natural subsoil was reached at 0.6m below ground level at a height of 37.3m AOD. It consisted of compacted a sandy clay matrix containing small rounded pebbles (**106, 206, 307, 406, 511 & 619**). This deposit was present in each of the test pits and was typical of the local underlying geological layers (second terrace river gravels).

8.2 Test Pit 1

Test pit 1 was located within the doorway of unit V. It was 1m x 1.24m x 0.62m (**Plate 10**).

The base of the trench contained a 0.25m thick layer (or undefined pit) **104**, this mid brown sandy silt deposit continued beneath building units IV and V and contained pottery dated to the late 16th – early 17th century. Also recovered from this layer was a large group of horn cores, a small assemblage of animal bones and a dress pin. This deposit could not have been laid down any later than c.1631 when building unit V was constructed. It is contemporary with the occupants of the primary construction phase.

Overlying this deposit was a mixed mid brown sandy silt layer (103) which originated in the 1950's. Compacted red sand, provided an additional bedding layer (101) for the paving slabs which made up the doorway thoroughfare.



Plate 10: Test Pit 1. Looking South

8.3 Test Pit 2

Test Pit 2 was located against the east facing elevation of unit II. It was 0.64m x 1.10m x 0.55m (Plate 11).

The base of the test pit contained a mixed dark brown-red, clay-silt levelling layer (205), containing cultural inclusions (charcoal). This lay directly above the natural gravels (206). A brownish red clay-gravel deposit (202) containing 17th century pottery overlay 205 and was the layer associated with the construction of the cellar in 1614. This layer was also exposed in test-pits 3 and 4. Cut into the top of this layer was a shallow squared post-hole (203) filled with a compact gravel/ hardcore mix (202). This lay beneath the stone slabs laid in the 1950s and was therefore associated with an early 20th century post.



Plate 11: Test Pit 2. Post hole [203]. Looking West.

8.4 Test Pit 3

Test Pit 3 was located against the east facing elevation of unit II. It was 1m x 1m x 0.6m (**Plate 12**).

The base of the test pit contained a mixed dark brown-red, clay-silt levelling layer (**306**), containing cultural inclusions (charcoal). This lay directly above the natural gravels (**307**). A brownish red clay-gravel deposit (**302**) containing 17th century pottery overlay **306** and was the layer associated with the construction of the cellar in 1614. A steep linear trench cut through this layer (**303**). This was for a late 18th century lead water pipe (**304**) which fed into the Hall's Croft cellar. The pipe trench had been backfilled with mid brown/red silty-clay/sand (**305**).



Plate 12: Test Pit 3. Pipe trench [303]. Looking West.

8.5 Test Pit 4

Test Pit 4 was located against the east facing elevation of unit II. It was 1m x 1.04m x 0.6m (**Plate 13**).

The base of the test pit contained a mixed dark brown-red, clay-silt levelling layer (**405**), containing cultural inclusions (charcoal). This lay directly above the natural gravels (**406**). A brownish red clay-gravel deposit (**404**) containing 17th century pottery overlay **405** and was the layer associated with the construction of the cellar in 1614. A large amount of worked stone lay towards the base of this deposit (**407**) some of which appear to have been deliberately laid. It is possible that these worked stones may have been the remains of a truncated structure.



Plate 13: Test Pit 4. Looking West

8.6 Test Pit 5

Test Pit 5 was located against the east facing elevation of unit II. It was 1m x 1.4m x 0.8m (**Plate 14, Figure 4**).

The base of the test pit contained a thick (0.4m) mid brown sandy-silt deposit (**509**). The base of the deposit was loose and it was more compacted towards the top, upon which was set a metallised surface (**508**). This surface was made up of small (20-30mm) rounded river pebbles. This surface (**508**) and underlying deposit (**509**) contained 13th century pottery and had been truncated (**510**) by the construction of Hall's Croft cellar. Sealing this surface was a stone rubble deposit (**507**). This contained frequent inclusions of broken limestone and cobbles packed up against the foundations of Hall's Croft. A moderately steep linear trench (**505**) cut through this layer and the layer beneath. This was for a salt-glazed foul-water pipe (**506**) laid as part of the restorations in 1950-51. The pipe trench had been backfilled with a mid-brown mixed sandy-silt deposit (**504**).



Plate 14: Test Pit 5. Metallised Surface 508. Looking West

8.6 Test Pit 6

Test Pit 6 was located against the east facing elevation of unit II. It was 1m x 1.1m x 0.7m (**Plate 15, Figure 5**).

Several *in situ* archaeological features were present with this test pit. The base of the test pit contained a compact mid brown-red, sandy-clay deposit (**615**), the upper part of which contained cultural inclusions (charcoal). This layer immediately overlay the natural gravels (**619**) and was a mixed interface deposit, all the archaeological features had cut through these layers.

A steep sided pit (**610**) was identified in the south-eastern corner of the trench. Its full dimensions were unclear. This was filled with a mid brown sandy-silt deposit (**617**). No artefacts were recovered from this fill. This was the same deposit encountered within the northern part of test pit 5 (**509**), dated to the 13th century. A further shallow pit (**614**) was cut at this level. This was rounded at the southern end and may represent a beam slot foundation. The feature had been backfilled with a dark brown silt deposit (**613**). A steep circular post-hole (**612**) cut through the southern end of the feature. A dark brown silty/organic deposit (**609**) marked the location of a rotted timber post (**608**). Fragmented stone, cobbles and a dark brown, sandy- silt (**611**) had been used as packing material around this post. These features (**610, 612** and **614**) were sealed by a thick (0.35m-0.4m) dark brown organic sandy-silt buried soil layer (**607**) containing 13th century pottery and animal bone. A moderately steep linear trench (**605**) cut through this layer and the layer beneath. This was for a salt-glazed foul-water pipe (**604**) laid as part of the restorations in 1950-51. The pipe trench had been backfilled with a mid-brown mixed sandy-silt deposit (**606**).



Plate 15: Test Pits 6 & 7. Post hole [612] and pit [614]. Looking North.

8.7 Test Pit 7

Test pit 7 was located against the north facing elevation of unit II. It was 0.74m x 1.3m x 0.7m. The test pit was linked to test-pit 6 and the deposits contained within were the same. Test pits 6 and 7 are thus described together.

8.8 Layers dating to the 1950-51 restoration

A black ash/ clinker bedding layer (**102, 201, 301, 403, 503 & 603**) for the stone paving slabs (**100, 200, 300, 402, 502 & 602**) is present across the entirety of the paved area at a depth of 0.2m below ground level. This layer was laid down during the restorations of the 1950-51. The archaeological layers have remained relatively undisturbed by this work. Test pits 4, 5 and 6 contained a flower bed cut (**401, 601**) which had truncated the layers beneath to a depth of 0.2m below ground level. The flower bed contained clean topsoil (**400, 500 & 600**).

9 THE FINDS

The pottery has been provisionally dated with the assistance of Stephanie Ratkai freelance post-medieval pottery expert. A full analysis of the finds is recommended.

9.1 The Pottery

A number of the pottery sherds date to before c 1250. These consist of Malverns/Malvern Chase wares most likely transported to Stratford via the River Severn and River Avon and Deritend Ware from Birmingham, among others. These sherds probably fall within the range of 1200-1250. The stratified context from which they were recovered suggests sustained occupation of the site.

Blackware and yellow ware, present from at least the final quarter of the 16th century into the early 17th century are well represented, primarily from layer **104**. Small fragments of Rhenish (German) stoneware date from around the mid 16th century to the first half of the 17th century. Although Rhenish stoneware is commonplace in coastal regions and ports it is less common in the West Midlands and is generally an indicator of prosperous bourgeois living here.

9.2 Further discussion of layer 104

Identified beneath unit V (the kitchen/stable/hayloft block erected c.1631) was a significant layer (or pit). This layer contained late 16th-early 17th century local pottery (midlands yellow ware and blackware) which is probably contemporary with the first phase of building (and therefore the first occupants Dr John Hall and Susanna Shakespeare). Also within this layer was a dress pin and a large amount of horn-cores. These may represent the remains of butchery waste, horn-working, leather-working or may possibly have been used for a medicinal purpose, (it is known for example, that Hall used 'Hartshorn' - deer antler). It is most likely however, that they were used for horn-working (the outer sheaths were removed and used) as there were very few additional animal bones were recovered. Layers relating to the construction of the house in the early 17th century also survive.

A 10 litre soil sample has been recovered from this layer. It is recommended that this sample be taken for further analysis. The potential for recovering plant material used in the preparation of medicine by physicians is a possibility.

9.3 The Bone

The bone assemblages from the main 13th - 17th century deposits included bones of cattle, sheep and pigs bearing butchery marks. In addition to the bones and teeth of cattle, sheep and pigs bones of fallow deer were found. These animal remains typify the diet in the period of occupation on the Hall's Croft site.

10 DISCUSSION

10.1 Phasing

Two main occupation phases were identified from the archaeological evidence.

Phase 1. There was *in situ* evidence of sustained occupation in the early 13th century (1200-1225), confirming that during this period there was a building(s) in this location. This evidence was identified in test pits 5, 6 and 7 towards the northern end of Hall's Croft. A post-hole, two pits (one of which may be a beam-slot), a metalled surface and occupation (buried soil) layers were all identified. Worked stone and a post-hole for a timber post, both provide confirmation of the type of building materials used in this early period. The pottery recovered was from local sources (Worcestershire and Birmingham) and was typical of the area. The cellar of Hall's Croft cut through these earlier occupation layers.

Phase 2 The second main phase of occupation can be confidently dated to 1613/14 and the primary construction of Hall's Croft. It is unclear if any earlier buildings had already disappeared or were cleared specifically for the construction of Hall's Croft. There was clear evidence of the levelling and construction layers, these contained 17th century pottery (including locally made Midlands Blackware and imported German Stoneware) .

Very little evidence of activity during the 18th and 19th centuries had survived. No buildings were located in this area during this period and it is possible that the restorations of the 1950's reduced the ground level removing much of the later archaeological layers.

10.2 Significance of the archaeological results

The archaeological layers are well preserved and exist 0.2-0.3m below the present ground surface. The conservation and remodelling of Hall's Croft which was undertaken in 1950-51 did not affect the below ground archaeology to any great extent (which the exception of intrusive service trenches).

Evidence of early occupation, consistent with the known historical background of Old Town Stratford has been identified. At present there is very little archaeological evidence available from Old Town. This work will contribute to the known history and provides evidence confirming the potential of future archaeological work in this area.

This work has recovered actual artefactual evidence from the early 17th century occupiers of Hall's Croft. This can support and contribute to the interpretation of the interior furnishings. The yellow ware, blackware and German stoneware pottery, horn cores and dress pin all came from this period.

10.3 Recommendations and Potential

The original levelling and construction layers of Hall's Croft survive, along with evidence of occupation from earlier periods. This work has highlighted the potential of future conservation projects to contribute to the history, interpretation and artefact assemblage of the Shakespeare Birthplace Trust properties.

The artefactual evidence recovered from the investigations has been identified at a basic level, as a guide to spot dating the archaeological features. The artefacts would benefit from further specialist identification to clarify their origin, purpose and significance.

The documentary research and known history of the house (including building phasing and ownership) is not used to its full potential within the property. Provision of interpretation panels and periodic guide training would prove useful in dissemination of this knowledge to the visiting public.

A full and updated architectural survey including modern survey drawings of the property would aid in this reinterpretation.

Any further intrusive excavations at a depth lower than 0.2-0.3m below ground level should be undertaken by an archaeologist, given the well preserved and undisturbed nature of the underlying deposits.

11 ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The project was commissioned by the Shakespeare Birthplace Trust. Thanks are due to Roy Steele, and the staff of Hall's Croft. Thanks also go to Andy Semke and Pyments. Archaeological Work was undertaken by William Mitchell. Specialist advice came from Stephanie Ratkai (pottery) and Nigel Dodds (illustration). William Mitchell produced the written report and managed the project for the Shakespeare Birthplace Trust.

12 REFERENCES

The following cartographic, pictorial and documentary sources are all available in the Shakespeare Birthplace Trust archives.

Cartographic sources

Board of Health Plan of Stratford-upon-Avon 1851

Plan of Cambridge House Old Town Stratford-upon-Avon 1868

Ordnance Survey 1st Edition Map 1:500 1886/7

Ordnance Survey 1st Edition Map 1:2500 1889

Ordnance Survey 1st Edition Revision Map 1:2500 1905

Ordnance Survey 2nd Edition Ordnance Survey Map 1:2500 1914

Ordnance Survey Map 1938

Architects drawings 1950's restorations

Ordnance Survey Map 1987

Pictorial Sources

Photo. Hall's Croft c.1864

Photo. Hall's Croft and Gardens c.1900

Photo. Hall's Croft and Gardens during restorations 1950

Illustration. Hall's Croft Gardens. R.B Wheeler c1800-20

Lithograph illustration. Hall's Croft. F. Sears & Co 19th century

Painting. H.E Forrest 1925

Painting. Mrs Male Late 19th century.

Documentary sources

Alcock N W and Meeson RA 1998, *Hall's Croft, Stratford-upon-Avon: an architectural survey and history*.

Alcock N W and Meeson RA 1998, *Hall's Croft, Stratford-upon-Avon: summary of architectural development*.

Barker N undated, *Hall's Croft, Old Town- Archaeological and Topographical Profile*.

Bearman, R 1988, *Stratford-upon-Avon, a history of its streets and buildings*, London

Bearman, R 1998, *Hall's Croft*. Unpublished document

English Heritage 1991 *The Management of Archaeological Projects*. English Heritage: London

Fogg, N. 1987, *Stratford-upon-Avon. A portrait of a Town*. Phillimore & co Ltd

Fox, L. 1953, 'The Borough Town of Stratford-upon-Avon'. Corporation of Stratford-upon-Avon.

Fox, L. 1997, *The Shakespeare Birthplace Trust. A personal memoir*' Hunter and Foulis Ltd.

Institute of Field Archaeologists 2008, *Standard and guidance for archaeological desk-based assessment; Standard and guidance for archaeological field evaluation; Standard and guidance for an archaeological*

watching brief; Standard and guidance for archaeological excavation; Standard and guidelines for finds work, IFA

Miles D W H 1999, *The Tree-Ring Dating of Hall's Croft, Stratford-upon-Avon, Warwickshire.*

Oxford Archaeology 2007, *Hall's Croft Stratford-upon-Avon, Written Scheme of Investigation (JN3499).*

Oxford Archaeology 2007, *Hall's Croft Garden and Attic Stratford-upon-Avon Warwickshire, Archaeological Evaluation and Historic Building Recording Report (JN3499).*

Planning Policy Statement 5 March 2010. *Planning for the Historic Environment: Historic Environment Planning Practice Guide.* Department for Communities and Local Government.

Pringle, R. 1997, *'The Rise of Stratford as Shakespeare's Town in Bearman (ed.) The History of an English Borough, Stratford-upon-Avon 1196-1996'*. The Shakespeare Birthplace Trust, Sutton Publishing.

Slater T R and Wilson C 1977, *Archaeology and Development in Stratford-upon-Avon*, Birmingham.

Stratascan 2006, *Geophysical Survey Report. Hall's Croft, Stratford-upon-Avon (JN2259).*

Warwickshire County Council 2006, *Archaeological Observation at the rear of Hall's Croft, Old Town, Stratford-upon-Avon, Warwickshire.*

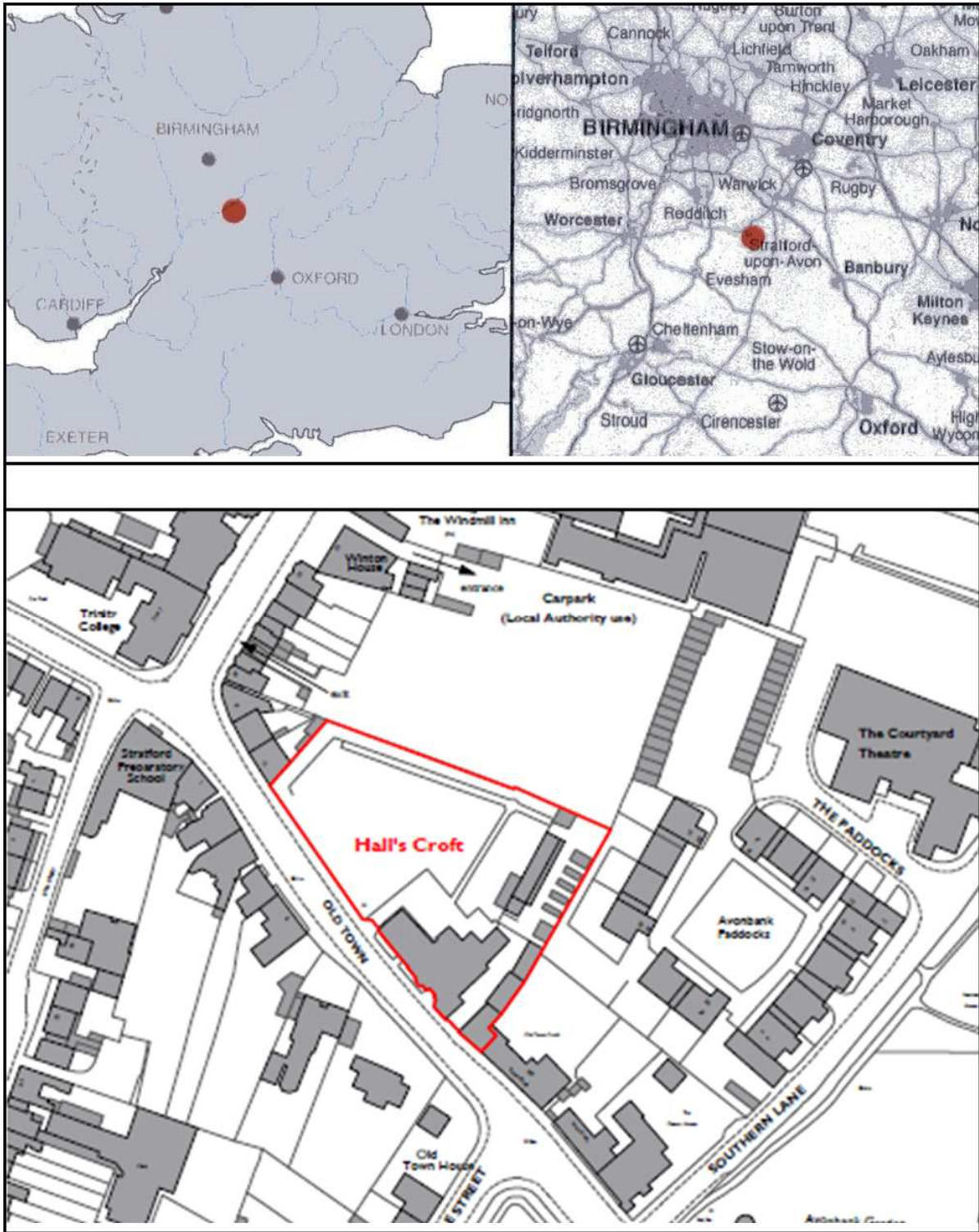


Figure 1: Site Location Plan

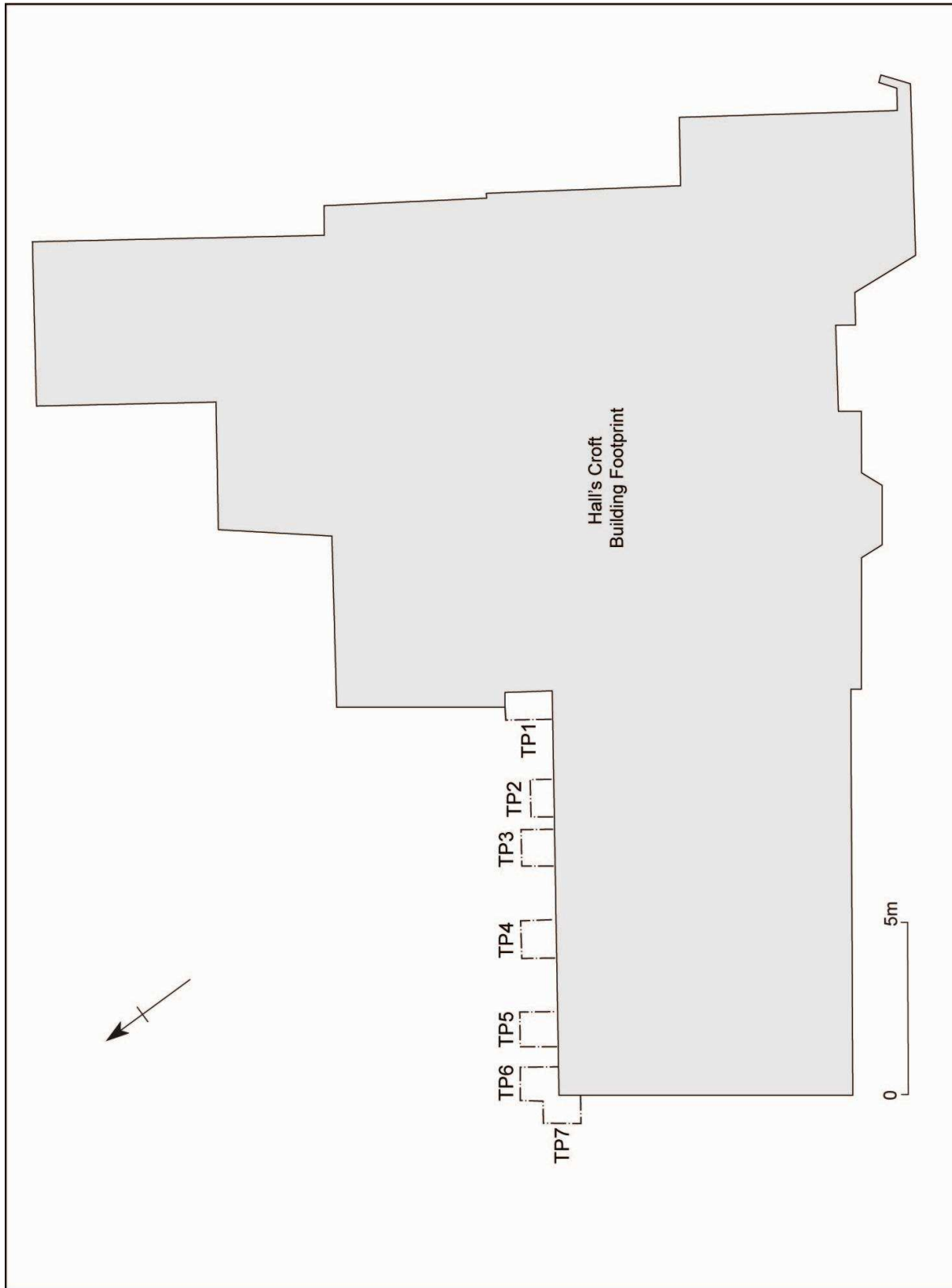


Figure 2: Trench Location Plan



Figure 3: Building Phase Plan (after Alcock and Meeson 1998)

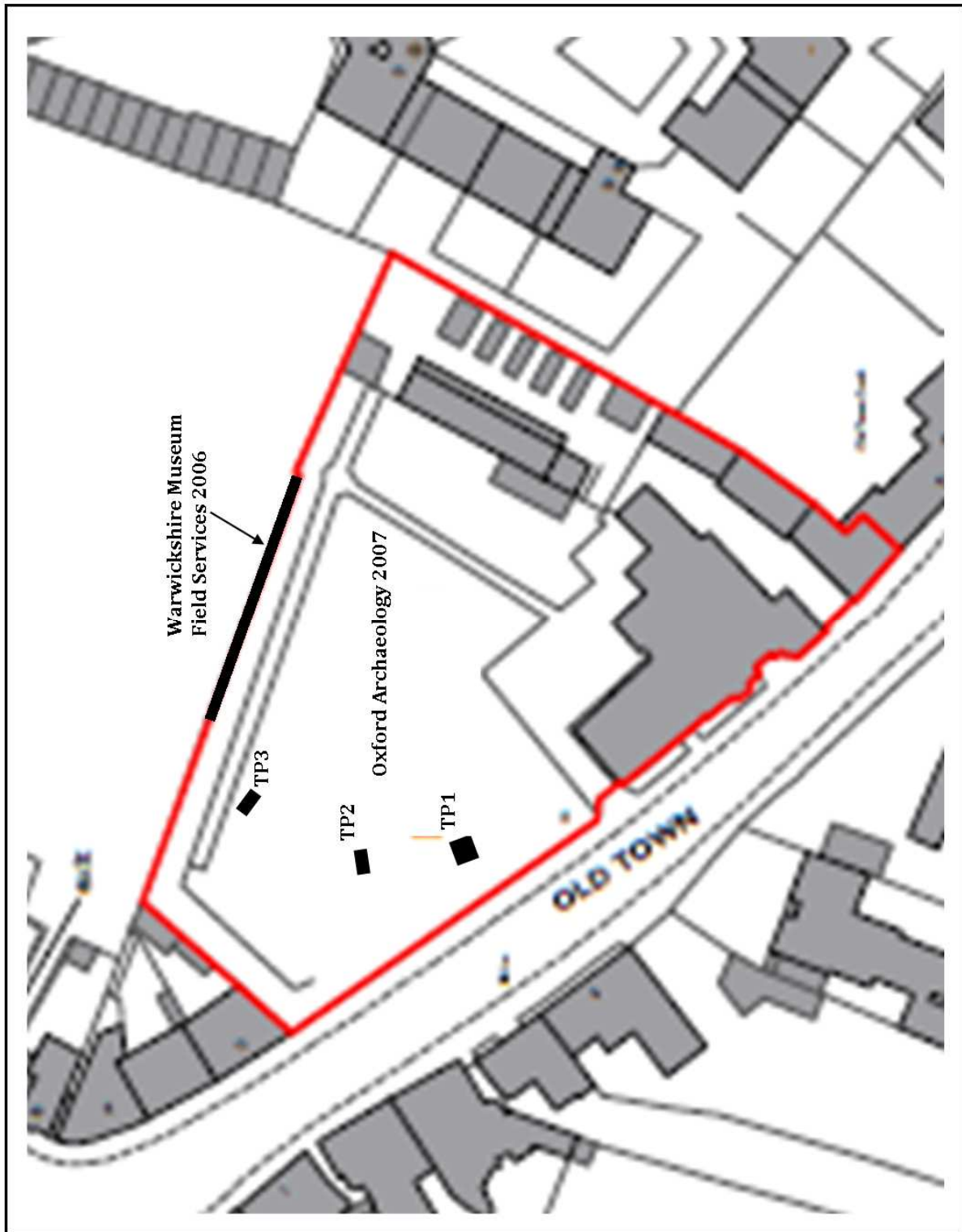


Figure 4: Location of previous archaeological investigations

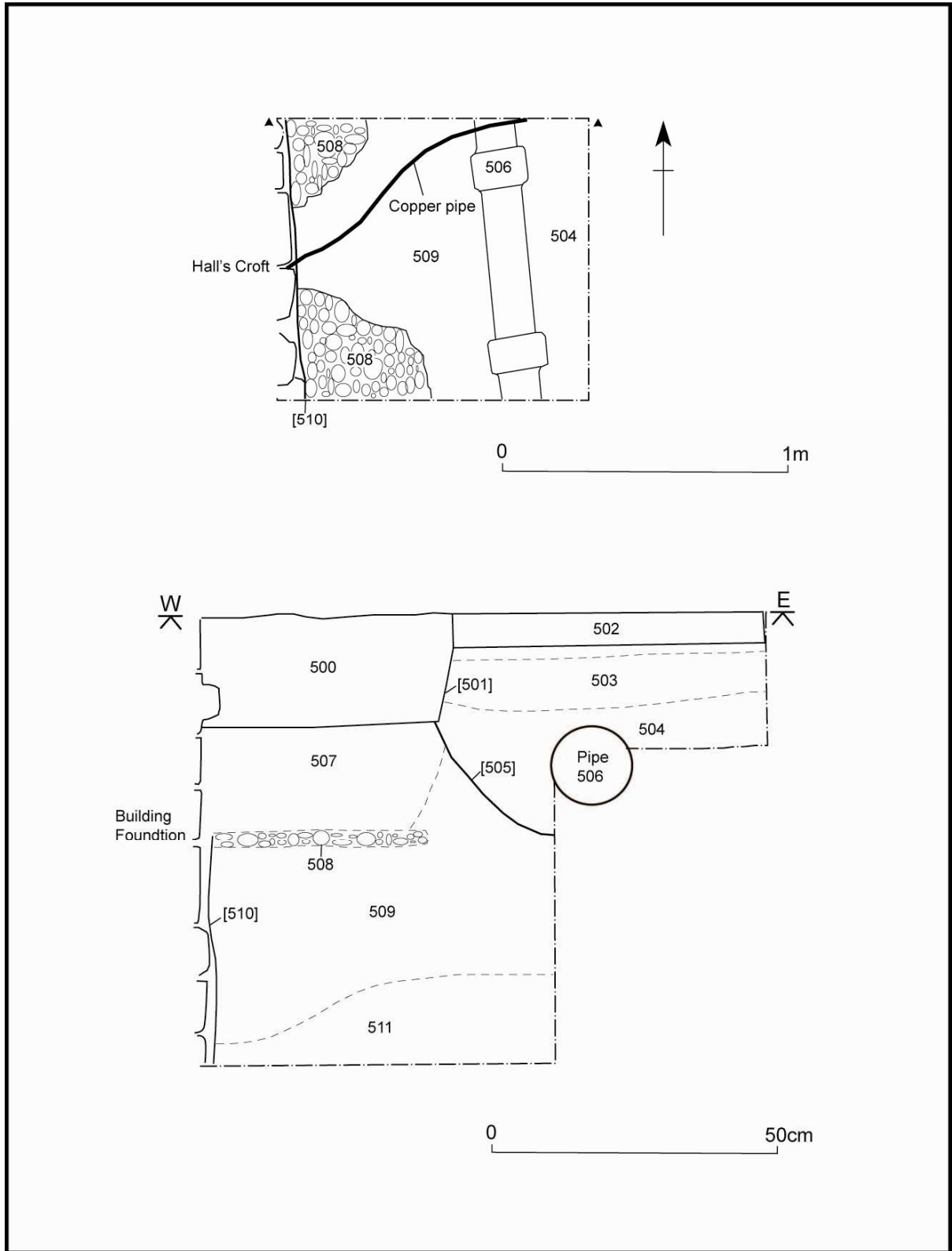


Figure 5: Hall's Croft Test Pit 5 Plan and Section

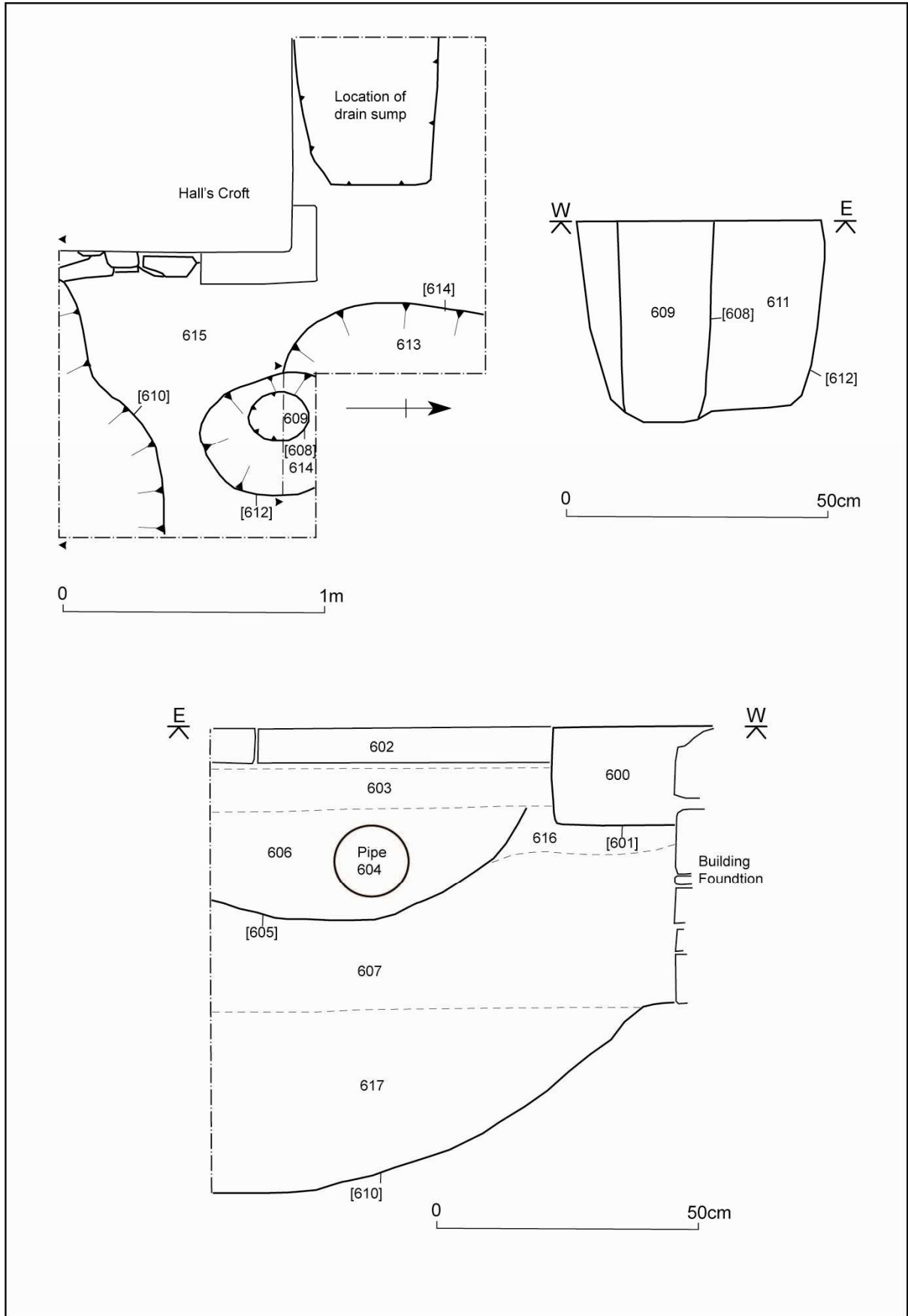


Figure 6: Hall's Croft Test Pit 6 Plan and Sections