

**BADGER EXCLUSION SCHEME
MOUNT BURES CASTLE MOUND
MOUNT BURES
ESSEX
ARCHAEOLOGICAL MONITORING**



**Essex County Council
Field Archaeology Unit**

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ARCHAEOLOGICAL MONITORING

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BADGER EXCLUSION SCHEME
MOUNT BURES CASTLE MOUND
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Client: Stour Valley Landscape Partnership (Managing a Masterpiece)

English Heritage

NGR: TL 9045 3255

Oasis No.: essexcou1-109598

Dates of Fieldwork: 10-11 May 2011, 25-26 July 2011.

SUMMARY

Archaeological monitoring was carried out at Mount Bures Castle Mound, believed to be the remains of the motte of a castle dating from the 12th century (SM20674), during groundworks associated with the construction of a badger proof fence. Badgers have been excavating setts into the motte, causing a considerable amount of damage to the Scheduled Monument and the scheme will exclude the badgers from the site by means of a specialised fence, and provide a new artificial sett for them to be relocated to. The fence is made up of a horizontal element, comprising wire fencing laid in a shallow trench then buried, linked to a traditional upright fence.

Archaeological monitoring took place during the excavation of the trench for the horizontal section of fencing and the augering of post holes. . With the exception of a sand filled feature of comparatively late/ modern date and a former mineral extraction pit, which had been filled with building rubble, no features or finds of archaeological interest were noted during the monitoring works.

The level of ground reduction was too shallow to expose any underlying archaeological features that may have been present. Consequently, it appears that the construction works have had little impact upon the archaeological record, with any remains that are present effectively preserved in situ. The process of relocating the badgers is now underway and the exclusion fence will prevent them from causing further damage to the monument in the future.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

This report describes the results of archaeological monitoring undertaken during groundworks associated with a scheme to exclude badgers from the Castle Mount at Mount Bures, Essex (EHER 9161, SM20674), believed to be the remains of the motte of a castle dating from the 12th century. The fieldwork was carried out by the Essex County Council Field Archaeology Unit (ECC FAU) on the behalf of the English Heritage and the Stour Valley Landscape Partnership (Managing a Masterpiece).

The site archive will be deposited in Colchester Museum. A digital version of this report will be submitted, along with a project summary, to the Online Access to the Index of Archaeological Investigations (OASIS) (<http://ads.ahds.ac.uk/project/oasis>).

2.0 BACKGROUND

2.1 Topography and Geology

Mount Bures Castle Mound, a Scheduled Monument (SM20674), is situated off Hall Road in the parish of Mount Bures, located 40m to the north of St John's Church at TL 9045 3255 (Fig. 1). It lies to the west of the road and the east of Cambridge Brook. It is situated close to the summit of the natural slope before the land starts to fall away quite steeply to the brook.

The British Geological Survey shows the motte situated on a narrow band of Kesgrave Sands and Gravels. To the east these sands and gravels are overlain by deposits of the Lowestoft Formation and to the west, lower down the valley sides, the London Clay bedrock outcrops at the surface.

2.2 Reasons for the Project

The motte, built with the sands and gravels excavated from the surrounding area, has been utilised by badgers since at least 1997 (Clarke 1997). The burrowing of these animals has caused damage to the monument (Plate 1) and it was considered that should such burrowing continue the motte was in danger of collapse. A scheme was devised to exclude the badgers from the motte and adjacent ditch by means of specialised fencing and to relocate them to a new artificial sett. As the construction works associated with this scheme lay within an area of archaeological potential, and partially within the Scheduled Monument itself, a programme of archaeological monitoring was undertaken during groundworks in order to mitigate any impact on the archaeological record.

2.3 Archaeological and Historical Background

The following archaeological background uses information from the Essex Historic Environment Record and previous survey work carried out by ECC FAU in 1997 (Clarke 1997).

The motte (Fig. 2; cover picture) comprises a steep-sided earthwork, c.60m in diameter at the base (c. 44m OD), which survives to 10m above the present ground surface. The RCHME (1922, 186) noted that the summit appeared to have been subject to excavation as did the Colchester Archaeology Group (C.A.G.) in the summer of 1974, when they carried out a contour survey of the motte, using a dumpy level. They observed two large holes on the summit, thought to represent unrecorded excavations from the 19th and 20th centuries (McMaster 1977, 4).

The motte is surrounded by a dry ditch c. 3.5m deep and between 10m and 12m wide. There are a number of irregular earthworks on the northern and western side of the ditch (Plate 2 and 7) which are thought to be the result of sand and gravel digging. One of these large pits is identified as a 'Sand Pit' on the 25" 1st Edition of the Ordnance Survey (1876).

To the south of the motte lies the churchyard (Fig. 2) which may perhaps have been the site of a bailey. The northern boundary with the steep sided dry ditch is supported by a roughly constructed retaining wall. A terrace to the west of the churchyard (Fig. 2 and EHER 9162, 9163), which had previously been thought to be the remains of part of a bailey, was investigated by C.A.G. in 1969, who concluded that it was the result of ploughing in an old enclosed horse pasture (McMaster 1969, 39). The RCHME (1922, 186) suggests this earthwork is a terraced garden of Mount Bures Hall.

By 1997, when a contour survey was carried out by ECC FAU, the sides and top of the motte were covered by dense undergrowth and trees. Following the survey a new access to the site was created via a short footpath to the east of the church, leading to a set of wooden steps mounting the east side of the mound. Selective clearance of the trees on top of the mound also took place.

3.0 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

3.1 General aims

The main aim of the archaeological work was to investigate and record any surviving archaeological remains which were impacted on during construction groundworks.

3.2 Research objectives

In the event that significant archaeological remains were encountered this report would have aimed to place the results in context with the research objectives laid out in *Research and Archaeology: a Framework for the Eastern Counties, 2. research agenda and strategy* (Brown and Glazebrook 2000). As no features of any significance were identified the project will not contribute to any of the research agendas.

4.0 METHOD

The Badger Exclusion Scheme had two main elements; the erection of a badger proof fence and the construction of a new sett further down the valley. The latter, laying outside the area of archaeological interest, was not subject to archaeological monitoring.

The process of constructing the badger proof fence (Fig. 2) was as follows:

- The route of the fence was set-out around the motte
- A trench was excavated on the outside of the fence line, to a depth of 0.2m (Plate 3)
- Wire fencing was laid in the trench with a section bent up to join the upright section of the fence (Plate 4)
- The trench is backfilled, burying the wire fencing (Plate 4)
- Fence posts are put in; the straining posts on the corners are placed in augured holes and the remainder are driven in
- Wire fencing is attached to the posts and tied to the horizontal section of fencing

Archaeological monitoring took place during the excavation of the trench for the horizontal section of fencing. This was 1.2m wide and 0.2m deep around much of the site. The exception was the section running along the churchyard boundary wall where space was restricted, here the trench was excavated to a width of 0.3m from the base of the churchyard retaining wall and a depth of 0.2-3m (Fig. 5; Plate 5).

All work was carried out in accordance with IfA (Institute for Archaeologists) by-laws and guidelines and complied with Standards for Field Archaeology in the East of England (Gurney 2003). Standard ECC FAU excavation, artefact collection and recording methodologies were employed throughout.

5.0 FIELDWORK RESULTS

The archaeological monitoring of fencing trenches identified a single archaeological feature, of probable modern date. Located in the second length of trench excavated (L2 on Fig. 2; Plate 3) this feature was 1.3m wide and sand filled, with pieces of plate glass, ceramic

building material and frogged brick embedded in it. In general the reduction level of the trenches (0.2m) was too shallow to expose the natural and as such archaeological features were not uncovered. In the last length excavated (L 10 on Fig. 2), where the land-surface sloped up more steeply towards the churchyard, patches of the underlying orange sands and gravel were more common, although no archaeological features were visible.

An area to the west of the motte, in the seventh length of excavated trench (L7 on Fig. 2) a considerable amount of modern debris including brick, tile and large concrete blocks was observed (Plate 7). These are thought to be the remains of an old farm outbuilding which were dumped in the sand pit which was marked on historic mapping.

No archaeological features were noted in the trench running along the base of the churchyard wall (Plate 5 and 6). Again ground reduction was not carried out to a sufficient depth to expose any archaeological features, although here was a considerable amount of post medieval and modern debris along this trench, presumably having been tipped over the churchyard wall. This included brick and tile, glass, broken glass jars and a light-bulb. As the material was unstratified and clearly post-medieval/ modern it was not retained.

No archaeological remains were identified during the augering of the post-holes, generally to a depth of 0.6m. Given the narrow diameter of these holes visibility was very limited, observations being restricted to the type of material the drill-bit was dragging to the surface. In the field to the east of the motte the auger appeared to cut topsoil and subsoil, becoming increasingly sandy at the base. To the west material which could be the natural sands and gravels was encountered at a depth of c. 0.4-5m below the present surface level.

6.0 FINDS REPORT

No finds other than material deriving from demonstrably modern features or unstratified Post-medieval/ Modern glass, brick and tile were noted during the recording works. None of the material has been retained.

7.0 DISCUSSION

With the exception of the sand filled feature of comparatively late/ modern date and the infilled sand pit, no features or finds of archaeological interest were noted during the monitoring works.

8.0 ASSESSMENT OF RESULTS

Although the groundworks took place in an area of archaeological potential, indeed partially within a scheduled monument, the only archaeological remains encountered were of late/modern date. The level of ground reduction was generally too shallow to expose any underlying archaeological features that may have been present. Consequently, it appears that the construction works have had little impact upon the archaeological record, with any remains that are present effectively preserved in situ. The process of relocating the badgers is now underway and the exclusion fence will prevent them from causing further damage to the monument in the future.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The investigation was commissioned by English Heritage, The Stour Valley Landscape Partnership and Essex County Council Historic Environment Branch. The archaeological monitoring was undertaken by Ellen Heppell of the ECC Field Archaeology Unit. Survey was by Andrew Lewsey. The project was managed by Adrian Scruby of ECC FAU.

Conservation Constructions Ltd. carried out the main groundworks (trenching and sett construction) and the fencing was erected by Richard Sharp.

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McMaster, I., 1977 'A survey of the Motte at Mount Bures' *Colch. Arch. Group Bulletin* 20, 4-6

APPENDIX 1 CONTENTS OF ARCHIVE

SITE NAME: Badger Exclusion Scheme, Mount Bures Castle Mound, Mount Bures, Essex.

Index to Archive:

1. Research Archive

1.1 Client Report

2. Site Archive

2.1 Trench location plan

2.2 Photographic Registers

2.3 Site Photographic Record (1 Set of digital images on disk)

2.4 Miscellaneous notes/plans

Not in File

N/A

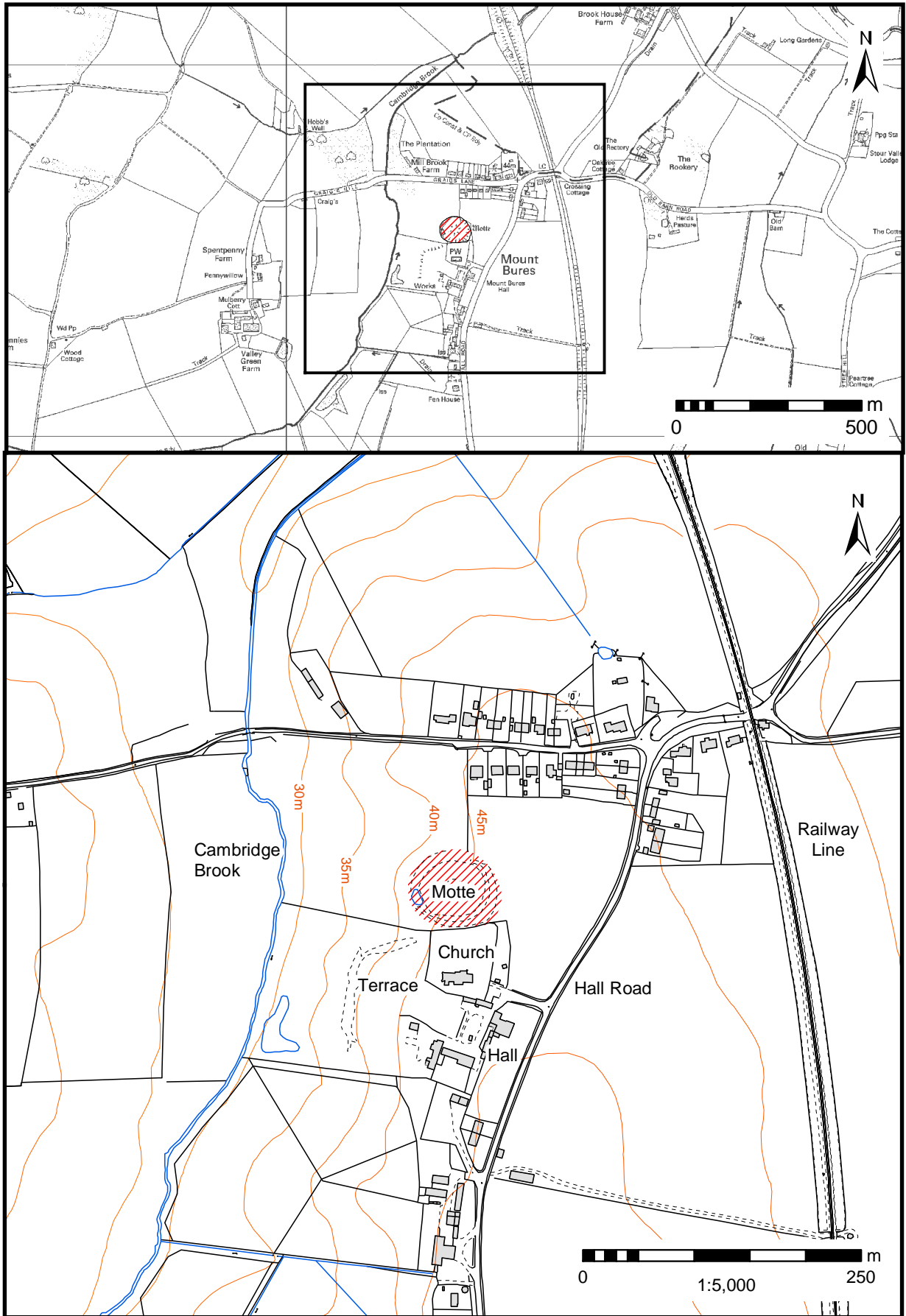
Finds

No finds retained

APPENDIX 2: HER SUMMARY SHEET

HER SUMMARY SHEET

Site name/Address: Badger Exclusion Scheme, Mount Bures Castle Mound	
Parishes: Mount Bures	District: Colchester
NGR: TL 9045 3255	Site Code: None
Type of Work: Archaeological Monitoring	Site Director/Group: Ellen Heppell, ECC Field Archaeology Unit
Dates of Work: 10-11 May 2011, 25-26 July 2011.	Size of Area Investigated:
Location of Finds/Curating Museum: Colchester	Funding source: --
Further Seasons Anticipated?: No	Related HER Nos.: EHER 9161, SM20674
Final Report: EAH Summary	Oasis No.: essexcou1-109598
Periods Represented: Post-medieval/ Modern	
SUMMARY OF FIELDWORK RESULTS:	
<p><i>Archaeological monitoring was carried out at Mount Bures Castle Mound, believed to be the remains of the motte of a castle dating from the 12th century (SM20674), during groundworks associated with the construction of a badger proof fence. Badgers have been excavating setts into the motte, causing a considerable amount of damage to the Scheduled Monument and the scheme will exclude the badgers from the site by means of a specialised fence, and provide a new artificial sett for them to be relocated to. The fence is made up of a horizontal element, comprising wire fencing laid in a shallow trench then buried, linked to a traditional upright fence.</i></p>	
<p><i>Archaeological monitoring took place during the excavation of the trench for the horizontal section of fencing and the augering of post holes. . With the exception of a sand filled feature of comparatively late/ modern date and a former mineral extraction pit, which had been filled with building rubble, no features or finds of archaeological interest were noted during the monitoring works.</i></p>	
<p><i>The level of ground reduction was too shallow to expose any underlying archaeological features that may have been present. Consequently, it appears that the construction works have had little impact upon the archaeological record, with any remains that are present effectively preserved in situ. The process of relocating the badgers is now underway and the exclusion fence will prevent them from causing further damage to the monument in the future.</i></p>	
Previous Summaries/Reports:-	
Clarke, R. 1997 'Contour Survey of Mount Bures Castle' <i>Essex Arch And Hist</i> 33 , 378-380	
McMaster, I. and Evans, K., 1996 <i>Mount Bures, Essex, its Lands and its People</i>	
McMaster, I. 1969 'A Medieval Excavation at Mount Bures' <i>Colch. Arch. Group Bulletin</i> 12 30-39	
McMaster, I., 1977 'A survey of the Motte at Mount Bures' <i>Colch. Arch. Group Bulletin</i> 20, 4-6	
Author of Summary: E. Heppell	Date of Summary: July 2011



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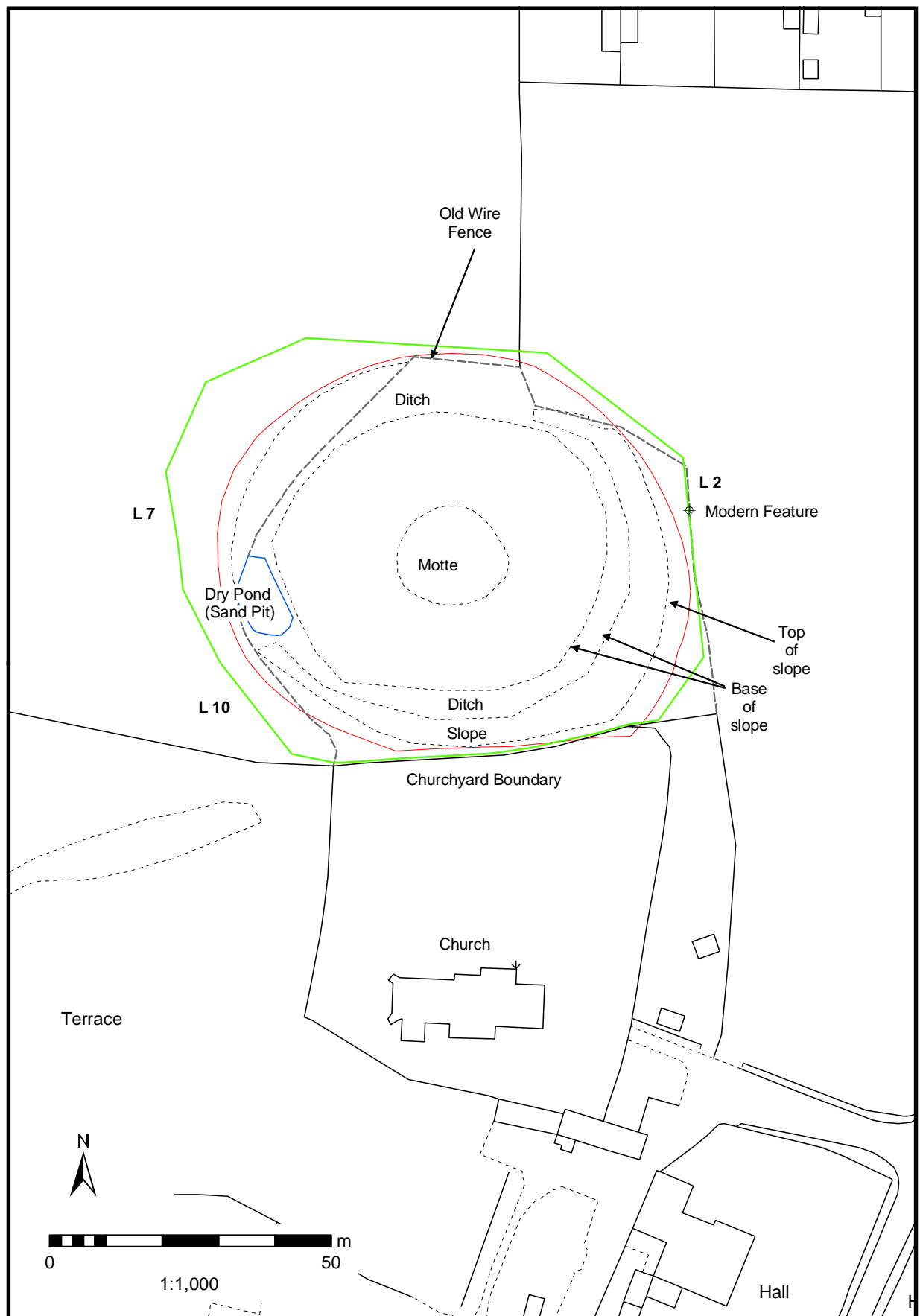
 Scheduled Monument

Fig. 1 Location map



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- Scheduled Monument
- New Fenceline

Fig. 2 Detailed map showing location of new fenceline



Plate 1 Badger setts excavated into the west side of the motte



Plate 2 Ditch and irregular earthworks to the west of the motte



Plate 3 Trench for the horizontal section of the fence, showing modern feature (looking north)



Plate 4 Trench (as above) being backfilled after the fencing has been laid in it. The upstanding wire on the right will link to the vertical section of the fence



Plate 5 Trench along the churchyard wall



Plate 6 Backfilled trench along the churchyard wall



Plate 7 Modern rubble filling the old sand pit