

birmingham archaeology

1 and 3 Morjon Drive, 42 and 44
Sundial Lane, Great Barr, West
Midlands

An Archaeological Watching Brief
2006

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1 and 3 Morjon Drive, 42 and 44 Sundial Lane, Great Barr, West Midlands

An Archaeological Watching Brief 2006

(GBRMD06)

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1 and 3 Morjon Drive and 42 and 44 Sundial Lane, Great Barr, West Midlands

An Archaeological Watching Brief

Summary

An archaeological watching brief was observed at 1 and 3 Morjon Drive and 42 and 44 Sundial Lane, Great Barr, West Midlands. The work was commissioned by Antler Homes, in fulfilment of a condition attached to planning consent for the development of twelve new houses and associated car parking areas. The site formed part of a field in 1886, and appears to have remained undeveloped since then, latterly as gardens to the rear of properties fronting Sundial Lane and Morjon Drive. Although all groundworks were monitored, no significant archaeological features, deposits or finds were observed.

1.0 Introduction

Between February and April 2006 Birmingham Archaeology carried out an archaeological watching brief at 1 and 3 Morjon Drive and 42 and 44 Sundial Lane, Great Barr, West Midlands. The archaeological work, which was commissioned by Antler Homes, was a condition of planning consent for the development of twelve new houses and associated car parking areas (Sandwell MBC building application DC/05/44382). An early medieval spearhead was recovered from a site to the west Whitecrest Road, close to the site of an earthen mound, and only a few hundred yards to the northwest of the present development area. There are also several crop marks in the Great Barr area, and a possible medieval landscape to the north of Wilderness Lane, with medieval moated sites at Peak House Farm. It is from this area too that a polished stone axe has been recovered. Sundial Lane was in existence by the time the 1886 Ordnance Survey map was published, when the development area was occupied by a field. The site appears to have remained undeveloped since then, latterly as gardens to the rear of properties built along the Sundial Lane frontage.

The project adhered to a written scheme of investigation prepared by Birmingham Archaeology (2006), which was itself based on a brief issued by Sandwell Metropolitan Borough Council (2005), and followed the requirements for watching briefs set down by the Institute of Field Archaeologists (2001).

2.0 Site Location

The study area is located to the rear of Nos 1 and 3 Morjon Drive and Nos 42 and 44 Sundial Lane, Great Barr, West Midlands (NGR SO 0482 9445).

3.0 Objectives

- To establish the presence/absence of archaeological remains within the development area.

- To determine the extent, condition, nature, character, quality and date of any archaeological remains encountered.
- To contribute to the existing corpus of academic knowledge.
- To make available to interested parties the results of the investigation subject to any confidentiality restrictions.

4.0 Method

All groundworks were monitored by a qualified archaeologist. This included the stripping of the topsoil and the excavation of foundation trenches by mechanical excavator using a toothless bucket. Following the stripping of topsoil the machined surface was inspected, and sufficient hand-cleaning undertaken to facilitate the definition of archaeological, or possible archaeological features and deposits.

Recording was by means of pre-printed pro formas for contexts and features, supplemented by plans (1:20 and 1:50 as appropriate) and sections (1:10 and 1:20 as appropriate), and 35mm monochrome print and colour slide photography.

5.0 Results

Stripping of the dark brown silty sand topsoil (1000), which extended to a depth of 0.30m, exposed the natural subsoil, which comprised an orangey yellow silty sand with frequent large and medium-sized stone inclusions (1001). Neither the stripping of the topsoil, nor the subsequent excavation of foundation trenches to expose sections through the subsoil, revealed any archaeological features or deposits. The excavated area was sufficiently large to suggest either that no development had ever taken place within the study area prior to the creation of the gardens in the 20th century, or that such development that had taken place it was so ephemeral as to have left no traces.

6.0 Acknowledgements

The project was managed for Birmingham Archaeology by Malcolm Hislop. Fieldwork was carried out by Kate Bain, Kristina Krawiec, Erica Macey-Bracken and Malcolm Hislop who also wrote the report. The illustrations were prepared by Nigel Dodds.

7.0 References

Birmingham Archaeology 2006 *Written Scheme of Investigation for an Archaeological Watching Brief at 1 and 3 Morjon Drive, 42 and 43 Sundial Lane, Great Barr, West Midlands.*

IFA 2001 *Standard and Guidance for an Archaeological Watching Brief.*

Sandwell MBC 2005 Archaeological Watching Brief at 1 and 3 Morjon Drive, 42 and 44 Sundial Lane, Great Barr.

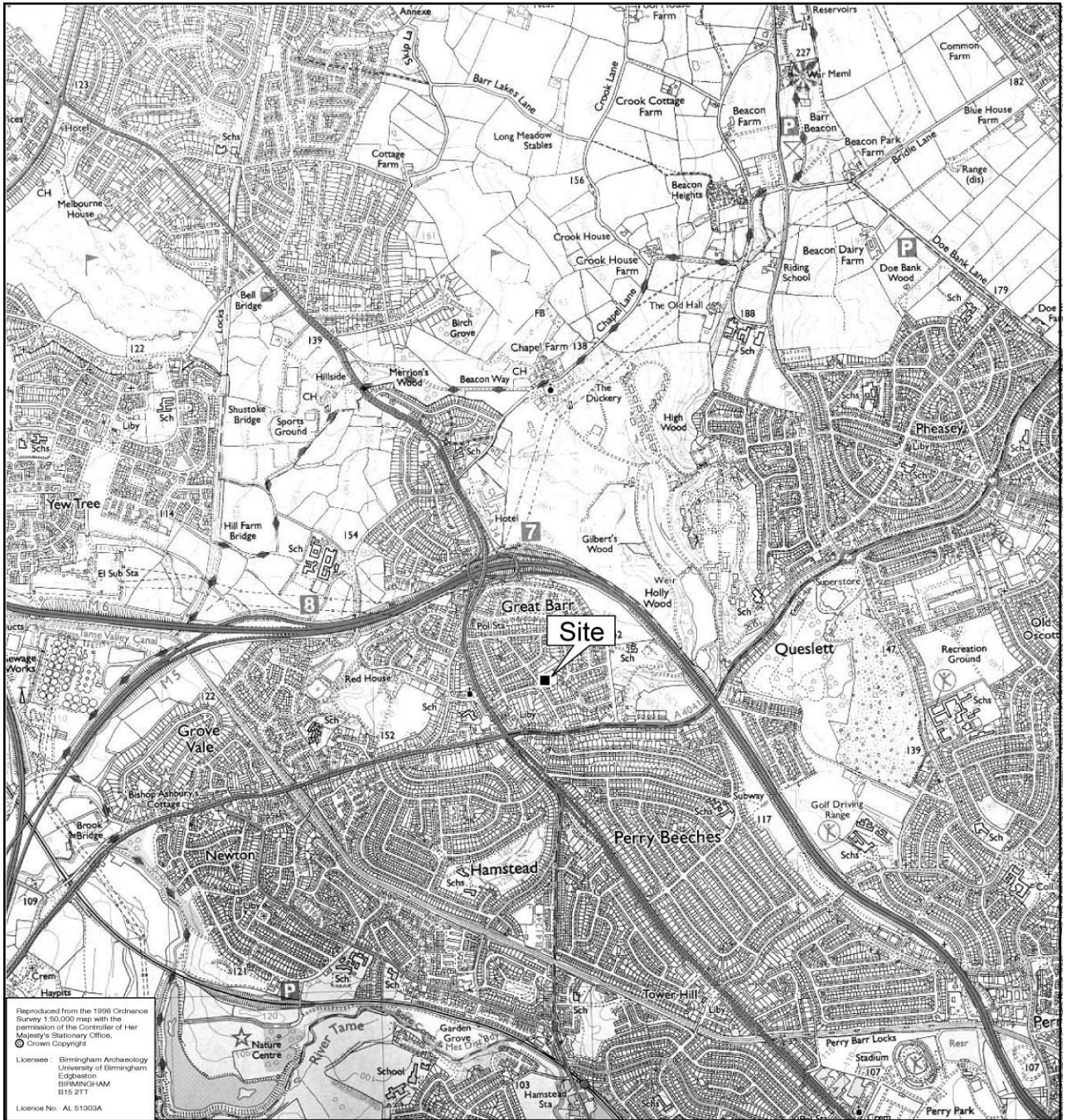


Fig.1



Fig.2

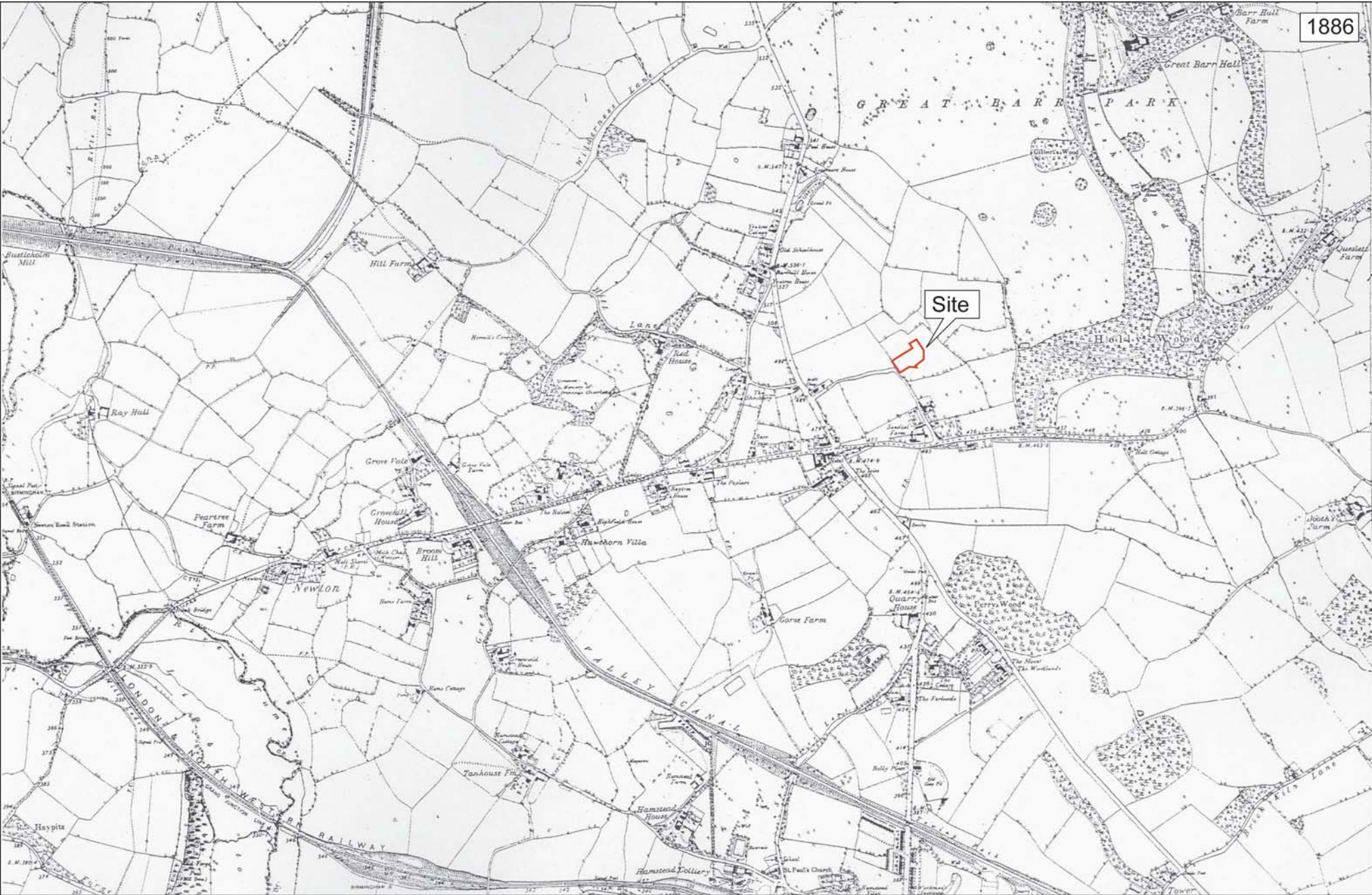


Fig.3

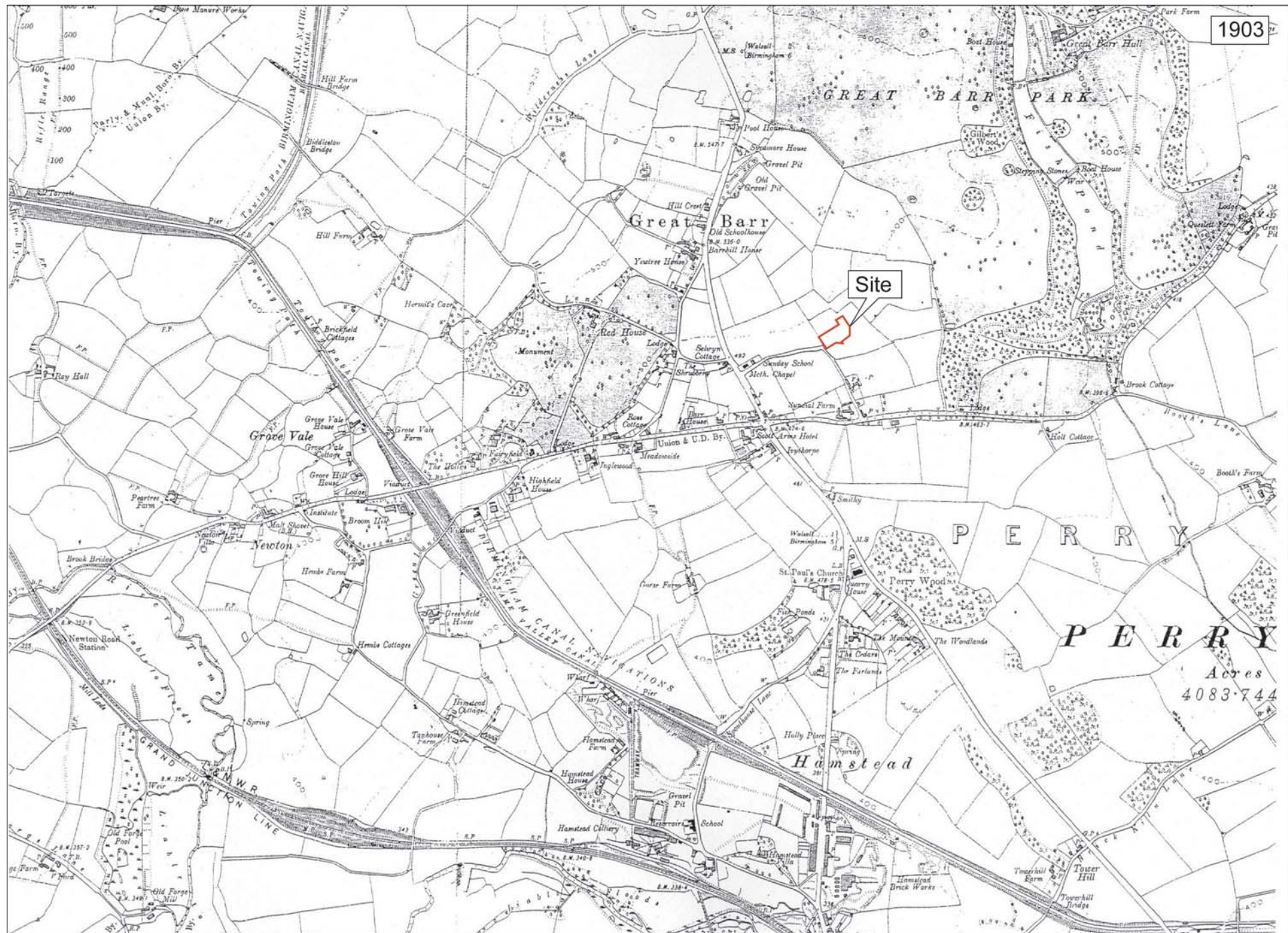


Fig.4