

birmingham archaeology

Westwood Campus Tennis Courts,
Kirby Corner Road, University of
Warwick, Coventry:

An Archaeological Evaluation
2006

Project No.1387

Westwood Campus Tennis Courts, Kirby Corner Road, University of Warwick, Coventry:

An Archaeological Evaluation 2006

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**WESTWOOD CAMPUS TENNIS COURTS, KIRBY CORNER ROAD, UNIVERSITY OF
WARWICK, COVENTRY:**

AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION 2006

CONTENTS

1	INTRODUCTION	1
1.1	BACKGROUND TO THE PROJECT	1
1.2	LOCATION AND GEOLOGY	1
2	ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND	1
3	AIMS AND OBJECTIVES	2
4	METHODOLOGY	2
4.1	FIELDWORK	2
5	RESULTS	2
5.1	INTRODUCTION	2
5.2	SUBSOIL (NATURAL)	3
5.3	SUMMARY OF FEATURES AND DEPOSITS.	3
6	DISCUSSION	3
7	ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	4
8	REFERENCES	4

Appendix 1: Written scheme of investigation

Appendix 2: Detailed context descriptions

List of Figures

Fig.1. Location map

Fig.2. Site location

Fig.3. Trench location

Fig.4. Trench sections

List of Plates

Plate 1. Trench 4, looking north

Plate 2. Trench 5, looking north

Plate 3. Trench 6, looking north

SUMMARY

In January 2006 Birmingham Archaeology undertook an archaeological evaluation at the Westwood Campus Tennis Courts, off Kirby Corner Road, University of Warwick, Coventry (NGR SP 2971 7676). The site was thought to be of possible archaeological significance due to the presence of an Iron Age 'banjo' enclosure, to the south, and earthworks associated with the probable medieval Sownes Moat, to the east. The evaluation was required to provide more archaeological information, prior to the submission of a planning application for the construction of a proposed indoor tennis centre building. A total of six trial trenches and two geotechnical test pits were excavated. No archaeological features or deposits were encountered and no evidence of Iron age or medieval activity was identified. A layer of re-deposited clay was encountered in all of the trenches, which was thought to be associated with landscaping operations undertaken in the area, probably during the 1960s.

WESTWOOD CAMPUS TENNIS COURTS, KIRBY CORNER ROAD, UNIVERSITY OF WARWICK, COVENTRY:

AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION 2006

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background to the project

Birmingham Archaeology was commissioned by the University of Warwick to undertake an archaeological evaluation at Westwood Campus Tennis Courts, off Kirby Corner Road, the University of Warwick, Coventry (hereinafter referred to as the site). The evaluation was required to provide more archaeological information about the site, prior to the submission of an application for planning permission for a proposed indoor tennis building.

This report outlines the results of the evaluation carried out between the 17th and the 20th of January 2006 and has been prepared in accordance with the Institute of Field Archaeologists *Standards and Guidance for Archaeological Evaluations* (IFA 2001).

The evaluation conformed to a Written Scheme of Investigation (Birmingham Archaeology 2006, Appendix 1) which was approved by the Planning Archaeologist, Coventry City Council, prior to implementation, in accordance with guidelines laid down in Planning Policy Guidance Note 16 (DoE 1990).

1.2 Location and geology

The site is located at the Westwood Campus Tennis Courts, off Kirby Corner Road, University of Warwick, Coventry (centred on NGR SP 2971 7676, Fig. 1). The underlying geology consists of alluvium, coarse sandstone and Tile Hill mudstone. The present character of the site is a tarmac outdoor tennis court area with a narrow pathway and hedge to the south, dividing the area from an athletics track. To the north is a university car park and games court, to the east a footpath and university buildings and to the west is a rugby pitch.

2 ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND (Fig 2.)

The site lies 100m to the north of an Iron age 'banjo' enclosure, identified as a cropmark feature on 1958 aerial photograph. This was partially excavated in 2002 ahead of the construction of an all weather rugby and football pitch (Hill 2002). The area was found to contain the remains of up to 14 round houses and other discreet features within parallel enclosure ditches. All of the archaeological features were sealed by a layer of re-deposited clay. Further indistinct cropmark features were also observed on the 1958 aerial photograph, which may have extended into the present site. To the southeast of the site are earthwork features probably associated with the remains of a moated site known as Sownes moat, of probable medieval date (Hill and Smith 1996). It was thought that features relating to this moated site may extend into the site under investigation.

3 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

The principle aim of the evaluation was to determine the character, extent, date, state of preservation and the potential significance of any buried remains. This information would enable an archaeological mitigation strategy to be devised.

4 METHODOLOGY

4.1 Fieldwork

The proposed development area covers approximately 0.65 hectares. A total of six trial trenches and two geo-technical test pits were excavated across the site totalling 148 m², which provided a 4% sample of the total area (Fig. 3). Trenches were regularly distributed over the area affected by the proposed development.

All topsoil and modern overburden was removed using a JCB mechanical excavator with a toothless ditching bucket, under direct archaeological supervision, down to the the top of the uppermost archaeological horizon or the subsoil. Subsequent cleaning and excavation was by hand.

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 through 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* context and feature cards. Written records and scale plans were supplemented by photographs using monochrome and colour print and colour slide photography.

Twenty litre soil samples were to be taken from datable archaeological features for the recovery of charred plant remains. The environmental sampling policy followed the guidelines contained in the Birmingham Archaeology Guide to On-Site Environmental Sampling. Recovered finds were to be cleaned, marked and remedial conservation work was undertaken as necessary. Treatment of all finds conformed to guidance contained within 'A strategy for the care and investigation of finds' published by English Heritage.

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). Finds and the paper archive will be deposited with Coventry City Museum subject to permission from the landowner.

5 RESULTS (Figs. 3 & 4, Plates 1-3)

5.1 Introduction

Only a brief summary of the stratigraphic sequence is presented here. Detailed summaries of the contexts recorded in individual trenches are presented in Appendix 2 and full details are available in the project archive.

Trenches 1-3 were located in the path area just to the south of the current tennis courts and were aligned east-west. Each trench was 5m long and a maximum of 1.3m wide, each narrowing to a minimum of 1.15m due to the constraints of spoil storage. Trenches 4-6 were located within the current tennis court area. Each trench measured 20m long by 2m wide and was aligned north-south

5.2 Subsoil (natural)

The natural subsoil was reached at a height of 86.21m AOD at the south of the site, rising to 86.71m to the north. It consisted of a pink clay with occasional grey mottling and was shown, during geotechnical investigations to be 1.8m deep, overlying loose sandstone and Tile Hill mudstone (encountered at approx. 3.2m).

5.3 Summary of features and deposits.

Trenches 1-3 encountered a very similar stratigraphic sequence, the natural subsoil being made up of a red-pink plastic clay (1003, 2003 and 3003). This was encountered at a maximum depth of 0.70m below the present ground surface, in Trench 1, rising to a 0.60m in Trenches 2 and 3. Immediately overlying the natural subsoil was a sterile pinkish yellow layer of re-deposited clay (1002, 2002 and 3002) which completely sealed the natural subsoil. This layer ranged from between 0.3m deep in trench 1, to 0.2m deep in trenches 2 and 3. Above the re-deposited clay in all three trenches was a 0.2m deep, mid brown clay-silt horizon (1001,2001 and 3001), which appeared to be a layer of topsoil that was sealed beneath a rough asphalt path surface (1000, 2000 and 3000).

In Trenches 4-6 the natural subsoil was a similar pink clay (4005, 5005 and 6005) identical to that seen in Trenches 1-3. This was encountered at a maximum depth of 0.8m below current ground surface, in Trench 4, rising to 0.6m in Trench 6. Several indistinct anomalies were tested by hand excavation and proved to be either minor variations in the nature of the natural subsoil or tree root activity. Overlying the natural clay was a layer of greyish yellow silty clay (4004, 5004 and 6004) similar to the re-deposited material seen in the previous trenches. This layer ranged in thickness from between 0.2m to 0.12m in each trench. Sealing this was a layer of brown clay silt, which appeared to be a layer of buried topsoil, measuring up to 0.24m deep. This was sealed by several layers of modern hardcore overburden, which made up the ground to the level of the current tarmac tennis court surface. No features or deposits of archaeological significance were found and no artefacts were recovered from the site.

Two 2m x 2m test pits (TP1 and TP3) were also excavated at the centre of the site during a geotechnical investigation. No archaeological features were identified, but a rise in the natural ground surface was observed in the most northerly of the test pits.

6 DISCUSSION

No archaeological features or deposits were identified during the evaluation. Disturbances of the surface of the natural subsoil were all identified as either natural geological variations or root activity, possibly associated with earlier land use. This suggests that indistinct cropmark features visible on a 1958 aerial photograph were probably not of archaeological origin. Evidently features associated with the Iron Age enclosure, to the south, and the moated site, to the east, do not extend into the area of the evaluation. The re-deposited clay encountered in all of the trenches was thought to be consistent with the re-deposited material that sealed the archaeological features on the Iron age enclosure site to the south (Hill 2002). This layer was probably related to the 1960s landscaping of the Westwood campus area.

7 ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The project was commissioned by the University of Warwick. Thanks are due to Steve Walker for his co-operation and assistance throughout the project. Thanks are also due to the reception staff of the Westwood campus sports centre. Chris Patrick, Coventry City Planning Archaeologist, monitored the project on behalf of Coventry City Council. Work on site was undertaken by Kate Bain and Ellie Ramsey. Kate Bain produced the written report which was illustrated by Nigel Dodds, and edited by Laurence Jones who also managed the project for Birmingham Archaeology.

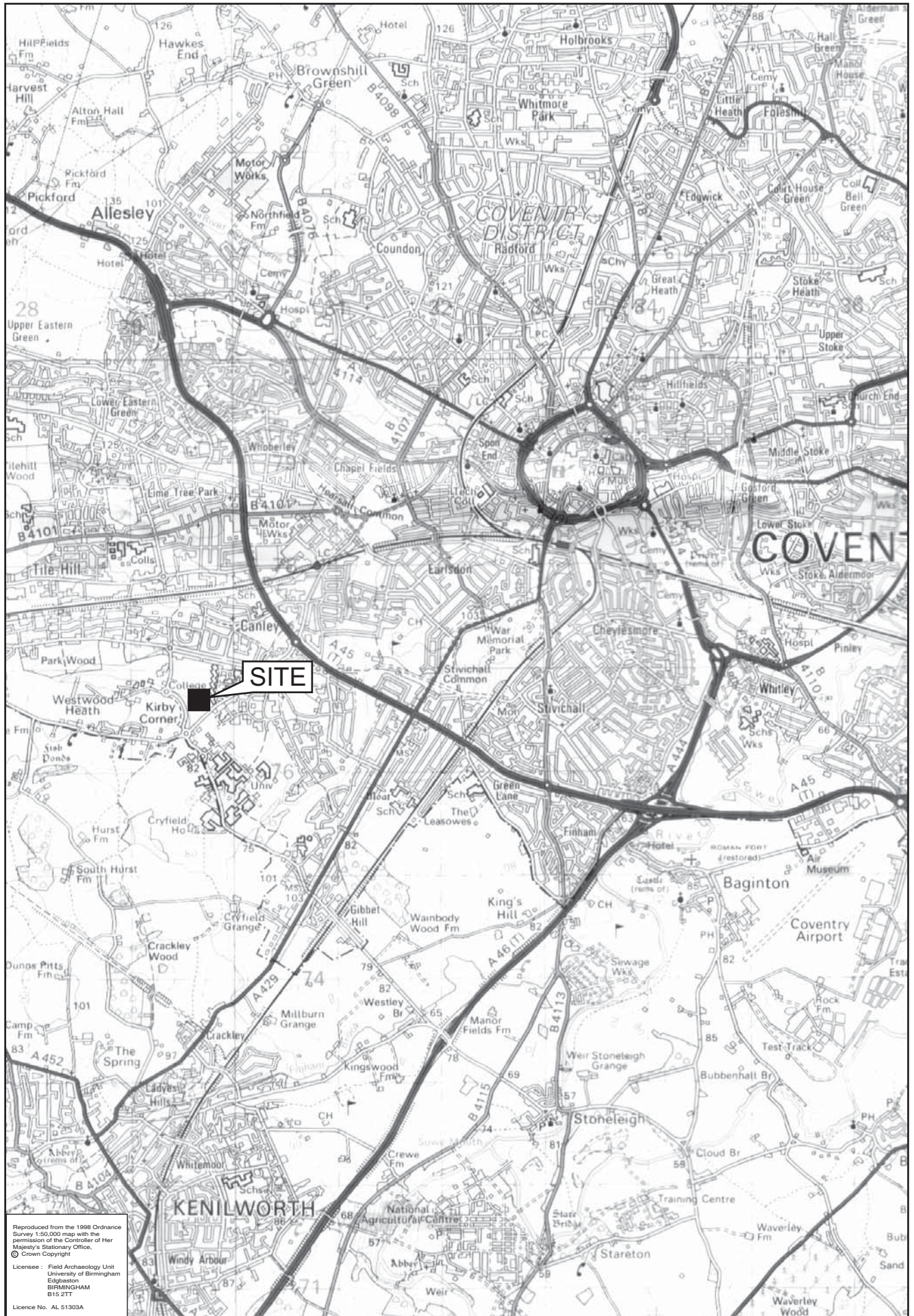
8 REFERENCES

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

Hill, S. 2002 *University of Warwick Archaeological Evaluation*. Unpublished report

Hill, S. and Smith, D. 1996 *Archaeological work at Westwood Running Track, University of Warwick, Coventry: Interim report*. Unpublished report

Institute of Field Archaeologists (IFA), 2001 *Standards and Guidance for Archaeological Evaluations*



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 BIRMINGHAM
 B15 2TT
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Fig.1

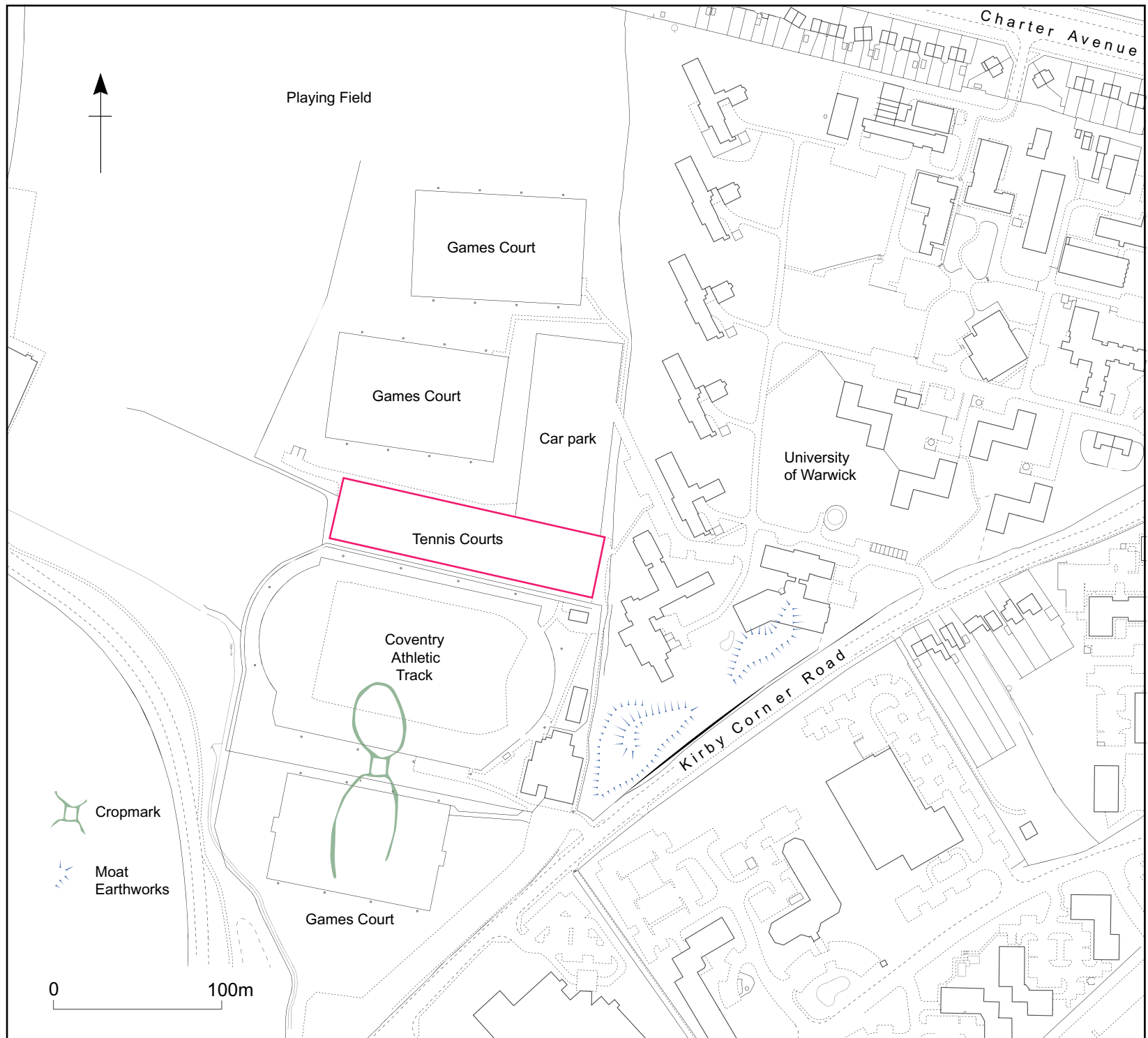


Fig.2

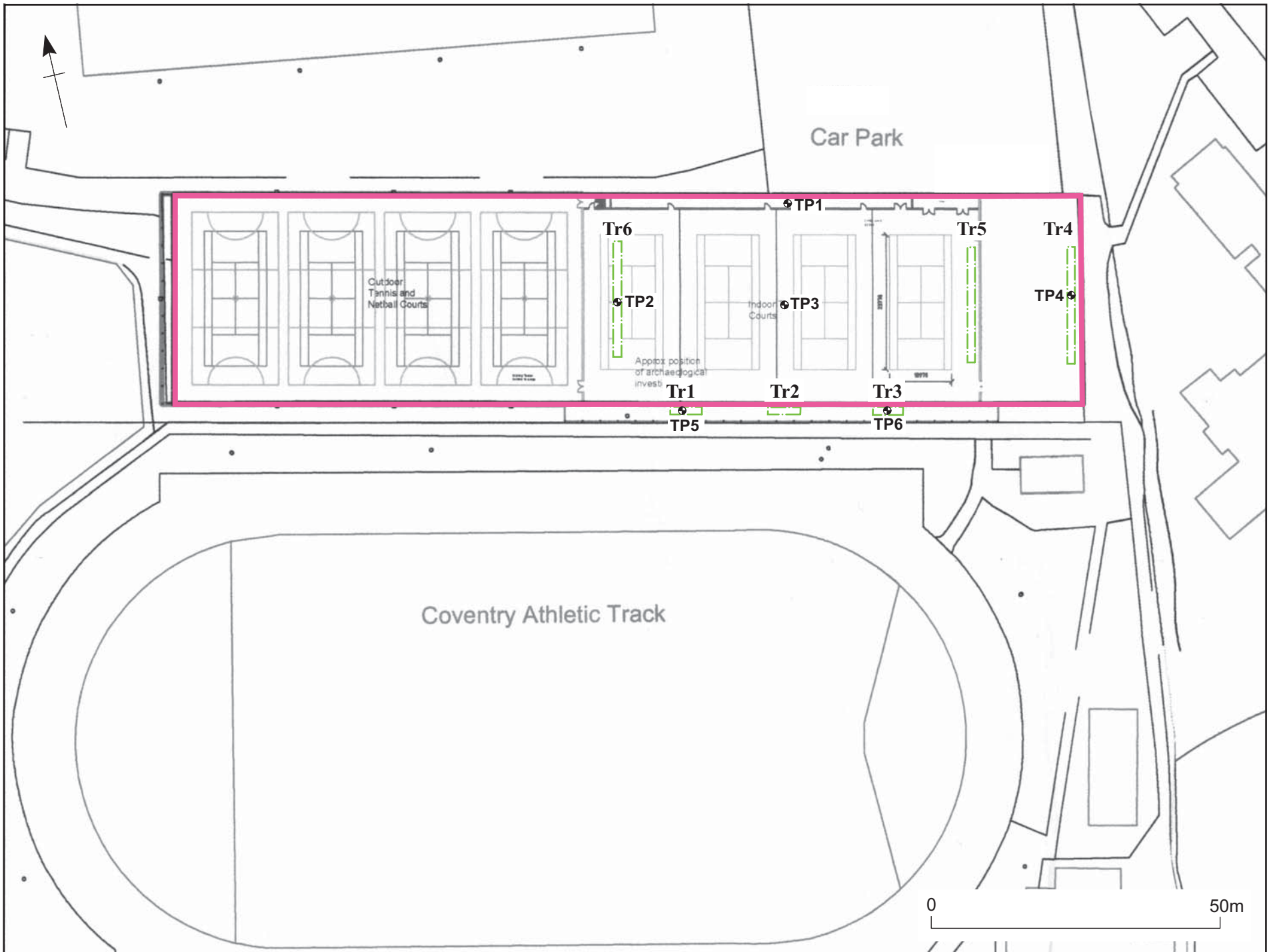
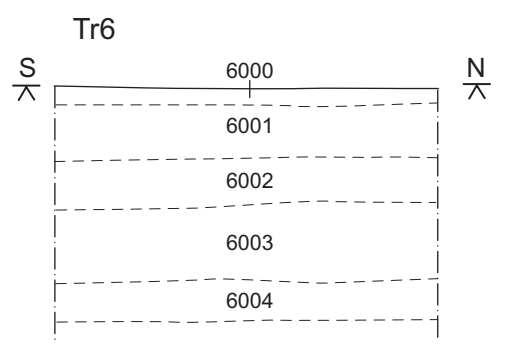
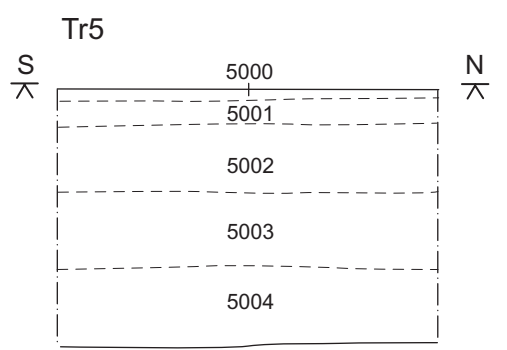
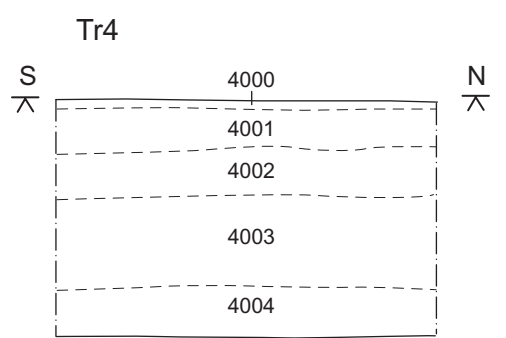
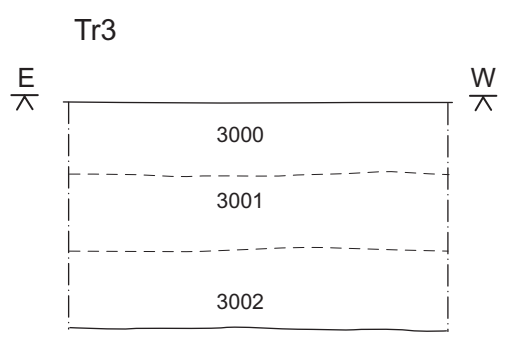
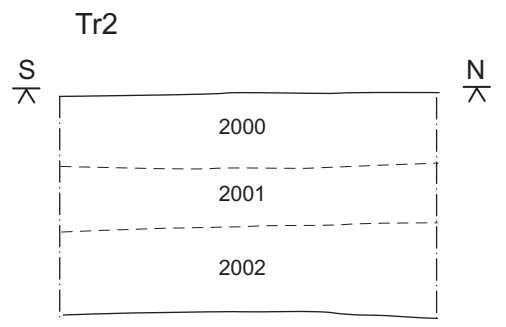
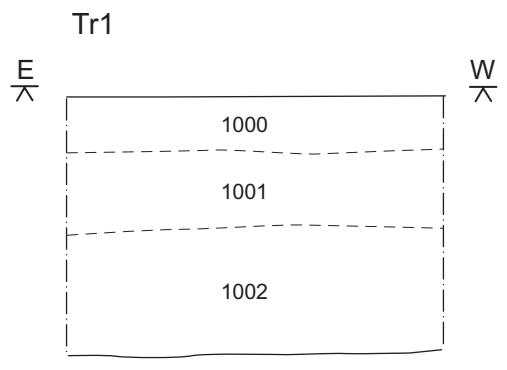


Fig.3



0 1m

Fig.4



Plate 1



Plate 2



Plate 3

APPENDIX 1

**WESTWOOD CAMPUS TENNIS COURTS,
OFF KIRBY CORNER ROAD,
UNIVERSITY OF WARWICK, COVENTRY**

**ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION:
WRITTEN SCHEME OF INVESTIGATION**

Developer: University of Warwick

**Archaeological Contractor: Birmingham
Archaeology**

Museum accession code: WW06

**THE UNIVERSITY
OF BIRMINGHAM**



**Birmingham
Archaeology**

PART A (SITE SPECIFIC)

1 INTRODUCTION

This document describes the programme of work required to undertake an archaeological investigation at the above site. It forms the written scheme of investigation for the work, which is a requirement of Coventry City Council. Any variation in the scope of work would be agreed with the Planning Archaeologist, Coventry City Council before implementation

The University of Warwick intend to submit a planning application for the proposed development of Westwood Campus Tennis Courts, Kirby Corner Road, University of Warwick, Coventry. The proposed development involves the construction of an indoor tennis centre building. As the proposed development site is of possible archaeological significance further information was required in advance of a planning application being submitted. An archaeological evaluation was recommended by the Planning Archaeologist, Coventry City Council. This is in accordance with government advice contained with PPG 16 (DoE 1990).

2 SITE DESCRIPTION AND LOCATION

The site is located at Westwood Campus Tennis Courts, off Kirby Corner Road, University of Warwick, Coventry, and is centred on NGR SP 2971 7676.

The underlying geology consists of alluvium and Tile Hill Mudstone.

The present character of the site is a tarmac outdoor tennis courts with a narrow strip of grass at the south side. To the north is a university car park/ games court, to the east footpath and university buildings, to the south an athletic track and to the west a rugby pitch.

3 ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The site lies 100m to the north of an Iron Age 'banjo enclosure', originally seen as a cropmarked feature on a 1958 aerial photograph, which was partially excavated in 2002 (Hill 2002). It was found to contain evidence of Iron Age roundhouses and enclosure ditches sealed below re-deposited clay. Further indistinct possible cropmarked features were seen on the 1958 aerial photograph to the north of the 'banjo enclosure', possibly extending into the present site. Also 100m to the southeast of the site are earthwork features probably associated with a former moated site known as Sownes Moat of probable medieval date (Hill and Smith 1996). Archaeological features associated with Sownes Moat may extend into the present site.

4 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

The principle aim of the evaluation is to determine the character, extent, date, state of preservation and the potential significance of any buried remains. This will enable an archaeological mitigation strategy to be devised, which may involve archaeological watching brief, further evaluation or excavation or a combination of these.

PART B (GENERIC)

5 METHODOLOGY

The proposed development area covers approximately 0.65 hectares, but only the eastern 0.35 hectares will be directly affected by the proposed Indoor Tennis Centre building. A total of six trenches will be excavated across the site totalling 144m² (90m x 1.6m), which will provide a 4% sample of the affected area (see attached plan).

Trenches will be regularly spaced over the whole area to be affected by the proposed tennis Centre building. Trial-trenches will be surveyed-in using an EDM total station or other appropriate survey instruments.

All topsoil and modern overburden will be removed using a JCB type mechanical excavator with a toothless ditching bucket, under direct archaeological supervision, down to the top of the uppermost archaeological horizon or the subsoil. Subsequent cleaning and excavation will be by hand. A representative sample of archaeological features and deposits will be manually sample excavated sufficiently to define their character and to obtain suitable dating evidence. Generally, 50% of pits or postholes and a 1m section of linear/ curvi-linear features will be excavated. Archaeological deposits will not be completely excavated unless this is unavoidable. The depth of archaeological deposits across the site will be assessed, although the full length of every trench will not necessarily be excavated down to natural.

All stratigraphic sequences will be recorded, even where no archaeology was present. Features will be planned at a scale of 1:20 or 1:50, and sections will be drawn of all cut features and significant vertical stratigraphy at a scale of 1:10. A comprehensive written record will be maintained using a continuous numbered context system on *pro-forma* context and feature cards. Written records and scale plans will be supplemented by photographs using monochrome and colour print and colour slide photography.

Twenty litre soil samples will be taken from suitable datable archaeological features for the recovery of charred plant remains. The environmental sampling policy followed the guidelines contained in the Birmingham Archaeology Guide to On-Site Environmental Sampling and the *Report of the Association for Environmental Archaeology Working Party on Sampling and Recovery*, September 1995. Recovered finds were cleaned, marked and remedial conservation work will be undertaken as necessary. Treatment of all finds conformed to guidance contained within 'A strategy for the care and investigation of finds' published by English Heritage.

The full site archive will include all artefactual and/or ecofactual 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 (Walker 1990) and Standards in the Museum Care of Archaeological collections (Museum and Art Galleries Commission, 1992). Finds and the paper archive will be deposited with Coventry City Museum subject to permission from the landowner.

6.0 STAFFING

The project will be managed and directed for Birmingham Archaeology by Laurence Jones Cert He (B. Archaeol), MIFA and supervised in the field by Kate Bain BSc assisted by an experienced site assistant.

Specialist staff will be, where appropriate:

Dr Lawrence Barfield- Flint artefacts, freelance consultant lithics specialist.

Dr Ann Woodward- Prehistoric pottery, Research Fellow, Birmingham Archaeology, University of Birmingham.

Dr Jeremy Evans- Roman pottery, Honorary Research Fellow, Birmingham Archaeology, University of Birmingham.

C. Jane Evans- Roman pottery, freelance consultant pottery specialist

Stephanie Rátkai- Saxon, medieval and post-medieval pottery, Honorary Research Associate and Finds Researcher, University of Birmingham.

Erica Macey-Bracken- Small finds, Birmingham Archaeology, University of Birmingham

Dr Andrew Howard- Archaeo-Geomorphology, Lecturer in Archaeo-Geomorphology and Remote Sensing, Institute of Archaeology and Antiquity, University of Birmingham.

Dr James Greig- English Heritage Archaeological Scientist - pollen and plant macro-fossils.

Dr Wendy Smith- Charred plant remains, Honorary Research Fellow in Archaeo-Botany, University of Birmingham.

Matilda Holmes- Animal bone, freelance consultant archaeozoologist.

Dr David Smith- Micro-fauna, Institute of Archaeology and Antiquity, University of Birmingham.

Professor David Keen- Molluscs and Quaternary Specialist, Research Fellow, Birmingham Archaeology, University of Birmingham.

Dr Megan Brickley- Human Bone, Institute of Archaeology and Antiquity, University of Birmingham.

Dr Roger White- Coins and brooches, Project Manager, Lecturer and Assistant Director (Development), Institute of Archaeology and Antiquity, University of Birmingham.

Jane Cowgill- slag and industrial residues, freelance consultant.

Rowena Gale- charcoal and wood. freelance consultant.

7.0 REPORT

A report would be produced for each of the three phases of evaluation. On completion of the fieldwork post-excavation work for each phase, including finds processing/ conservation, analysis and primary research, will be undertaken. A site archive will be compiled and an illustrated report will be prepared. This report would be in the format required by the *Management of Archaeological Projects 2* (published by English Heritage), to include:

- (a) Summary.
- (b) Description of the archaeological background.
- (c) Method.
- (e) A narrative description of the results and discussion of the evidence, set in their local, regional and national research context, supported by appropriate plans, sections and photographs.
- (f) Summary of the finds and environmental evidence.
- (g) Specialist assessments of the finds and environmental evidence.
- (h) Impact assessment and recommended mitigation strategy

The written report will be made publicly accessible, as part of the Coventry City Council Sites and Monuments Record within six months of completion. Two copies of the report will be lodged with the Planning Archaeologist, Coventry City Council. A digital copy on CD-ROM will be provided. A summary report may be submitted for inclusion in *West Midlands Archaeology*. If the results are considered of regional or national importance it may be appropriate to publish the report in an archaeological journal.

8.0 TIMETABLE

The fieldwork is scheduled to start on Tuesday 17th January. Review/ monitoring meetings will be arranged during the fieldwork.

Week 1: setting out trenches and start of machine excavation of trenches,
manual excavation and recording/ backfilling of trenches

Weeks 2-4: specialist reports and report preparation

9.0 GENERAL

All project staff will adhere to the Code of Conduct of the Institute of Field Archaeologists. The project will follow the requirements set down in the *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Field Evaluation* (Institute of Field Archaeologists 1994, revised 2001).

A detailed Risk Assessment will be prepared prior to the commencement of fieldwork. All current health and safety legislation, regulations and guidance will be complied with. The excavation will conform to the *Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1992* and *Health & Safety in Field Archaeology Manual* (SCAUM 1991).

Any human remains encountered will be initially left in situ and covered. In the event that human remains need to be removed this will be carried out under the terms of a Home Office Licence and adhering to relevant environmental health regulations. All finds which may constitute 'treasure' under the Treasure Act, 1997 will be removed to a safe place and reported to the local Coroner. If removal is not possible on the same working day as discovery, appropriate security arrangements will be provided to keep the finds safe from theft.

10 REFERENCES

- Department of the Environment (DoE) 1990 *Planning Policy Guidance Note 16: Archaeology and Planning*
- Hill, S. 2002 *University of Warwick Archaeological Evaluation*. Unpublished report
- Hill, S. and Smith, D. 1996 *Archaeological work at Westwood Running Track, University of Warwick, Coventry: Interim report*. Unpublished report
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- Standing Conference of Archaeological Unit Managers (SCAUM), 1991 *Health & Safety in Field Archaeology Manual*. Revised 1997
- Walker, K. 1990 *Guidelines for the preparation of excavation archives for long-term storage*. UKIC, London.

APPENDIX 2

Westwood Campus Tennis Courts, University of Warwick
Archaeological Evaluation: Written Scheme of Investigation

Site Code	Strat unit	Cut keyword	Description of strat unit	Max depth	Above:
WW06	1000	LAYER	Asphalt path surface	0.15	1001
WW06	1001	LAYER	Brown clay-silt, buried topsoil	0.2	1002
WW06	1002	LAYER	Pinkish yellow re-deposited clay	0.3	1003
WW06	1003	LAYER	Pink plastic clay natural		
WW06	2000	LAYER	Asphalt path surface	0.2	2001
WW06	2001	LAYER	Brown clay-silt, buried topsoil	0.15	2002
WW06	2002	LAYER	Pinkish yellow re-deposited clay	0.2	2003
WW06	2003	LAYER	Pink plastic clay natural		
WW06	3000	LAYER	Asphalt path surface	0.2	3001
WW06	3001	LAYER	Brown clay-silt, buried topsoil	0.2	3002
WW06	3002	LAYER	Pinkish yellow re-deposited clay	0.2	3003
WW06	3003	LAYER	Pink plastic clay natural		
WW06	4000	LAYER	Tarmac court surface	0.04	4001
WW06	4001	LAYER	Asphalt levelling layer	0.1	4002
WW06	4002	LAYER	Crushed stone and rubble levelling layer	0.12	4003
WW06	4003	LAYER	Mid brown clay silt, representing buried topsoil	0.24	4004
WW06	4004	LAYER	Yellow-grey re-deposited clay subsoil	0.12	4005
WW06	4005	LAYER	Pink plastic clay natural		
WW06	5000	LAYER	Tarmac court surface	0.04	5001
WW06	5001	LAYER	Asphalt levelling layer	0.06	5002
WW06	5002	LAYER	Crushed stone and rubble levelling layer	0.19	5003
WW06	5003	LAYER	Mid brown clay silt, representing buried topsoil	0.2	5004
WW06	5004	LAYER	Yellow-grey re-deposited clay subsoil	0.2	5005
WW06	5005	LAYER	Pink plastic clay natural		
WW06	6000	LAYER	Tarmac court surface	0.05	6001

Westwood Campus Tennis Courts, University of Warwick
Archaeological Evaluation: Written Scheme of Investigation

WW06	6001	LAYER	Asphalt levelling layer	0.14	6002
WW06	6002	LAYER	Crushed stone and rubble levelling layer	0.13	6003
WW06	6003	LAYER	Mid brown clay silt, representing buried topsoil	0.2	6004
WW06	6004	LAYER	Yellow-grey re-deposited clay subsoil	0.15	6005
WW06	6005	LAYER	Pink plastic clay natural		