



THE UNIVERSITY
OF BIRMINGHAM

**Scheduled Ancient
Monument ST No. 221,
Newbold Quarry,
Barton-under-Needwood,
Staffordshire**

**An archaeological
watching brief**

Birmingham University Field Archaeology Unit



Institute of Field
Archaeologists

Birmingham University Field Archaeology Unit
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**Scheduled Ancient Monument ST No. 221,
Newbold Quarry,
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Staffordshire
An archaeological watching brief
2002**

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Scheduled Ancient Monument ST No 221, Newbold Quarry, Barton-under-Needwood, Staffordshire. An Archaeological Watching Brief 2002.

Summary

An archaeological watching brief was carried out by Birmingham University Field Archaeology Unit (BUFAU) in September 2002 on the site of Scheduled Ancient Monument ST No 221 believed to be an Iron Age, D-shaped enclosure (centred on National Grid Reference SK 198200). The work was commissioned by Phoenix Consulting Archaeology Ltd. on behalf of Aggregate Industries U.K. Ltd as part of an application for a northerly extension to the quarry. Previous archaeological works in the area included a geophysical survey and evaluation trenching in the Scheduled Area, neither of which provided any conclusive evidence as to the survival of the enclosure. The topsoil strip of the whole of the monument revealed the remains of a ridge and furrow field system but no evidence of the enclosure was identified. It was thus presumed that had the cropmark been correctly interpreted, it had either been destroyed by modern ploughing activity or possibly incorrectly plotted from the aerial photograph.

1.0 Introduction

An archaeological watching brief was undertaken by Birmingham University Field Archaeology Unit in September 2002, during topsoil stripping in advance of gravel extraction at Newbold Quarry, Barton-Under-Needwood, Staffordshire. The area of the watching brief was located in the area of Scheduled Ancient Monument ST No 221, described as a D-shaped enclosure (centred on National Grid Reference SK 198200) and identified as a cropmark by an aerial photograph. The work was commissioned by Phoenix Consulting Archaeology Ltd. on behalf of Aggregate Industries U.K. Ltd as part of planning permission for gravel extraction in the area of the scheduled monument.

As part of the planning application process an archaeological evaluation of the site was undertaken by BUFAU in 1991-2. This programme of works consisted of a geophysical survey and programme of trial trenching (Hughes 1992).

The trenching in the Scheduled Area showed that the only archaeology present within the area were a series of poorly preserved field boundaries and the truncated remains of agricultural furrows. No evidence of the D-shaped enclosure was discovered and the evaluation concluded that the interpretation of the cropmark was incorrect.

Scheduled Monument Consent (S.M.C.) to allow for the removal of soils and gravel extraction in this area was granted in 1992. This S.M.C. had lapsed prior to the actual quarry need to remove soils in this area and a requirement of the new S.M.C. was a continuous archaeological watching brief. The watching brief was carried out in accordance with a specification produced by Phoenix Consulting Archaeology (Richmond 2002), conditions of the S.M.C. and the 1999 Institute of Field Archaeologists standard guidance for an archaeological watching brief.

2.0 Site Location (Fig 1.)

The site lies to the west of the River Trent on gravels and glacial sands forming a flat terrace. It is located approximately 5km to the north of the confluence with the River Tame. The site is also located approximately 3km southwest of Burton-upon-Trent, with the nearest settlement being the village of Tatenhill, 1km to the north. Geological data suggests that a fine sandy topsoil/subsoil exists above sandy gravel deposits between 0.3 and 0.7m below ground level. The gravel deposit varies in depth before red-brown, clayey silts are encountered. The site is on flat ground at the base of a slope and was formerly used as agricultural land but had been kept as set-aside for at least two years. The Scheduled area had clearly been a ploughed field but had been allowed to overgrow with scrub vegetation.

3.0 Archaeological Background.

The site is situated within the rich archaeological landscape within the river valleys of southeast Staffordshire. Much of the known archaeological remains encountered were recorded on the gravel terracing and alluvial deposits of the Rivers Trent, Tame and Mease. Much of the information on past settlement and land use in the area has been obtained from aerial photographs although important excavations have been undertaken, the results of which have provided an outline settlement sequence for the area (Jones 1992, Martin 1998, Coates 2002, *in press*, Coates and Richmond 2002, Hughes 1991, Losco-Bradley 1984, Miles 1969).

Evidence for human settlement activity in the area ranges from the Lower Palaeolithic through to Roman, with some significant sites indicating some level of continuous occupation beginning in the Neolithic period.

During the 1960s' aerial photographs of the area, now included in the Newbold quarry extension, were taken which suggested the presence of pre-enclosure field systems and a D-shaped enclosure. On morphological grounds this was believed to be of Iron Age date and was, on this basis, given scheduled status in 1982. An archaeological evaluation was required in advance of the northern extension of the quarry which included the area of the Scheduled Ancient Monument.

A geophysical survey, consisting of a combination of resistivity and magnetometry (Geophysical Surveys of Bradford 1991), was undertaken across the Scheduled Area and other areas of the site (Fig 2). The overall results of this called into question the identification of the D-shaped enclosure, particularly as the southern and western boundaries appeared to extend beyond the limits of the supposed site. An archaeological trenching evaluation (Hughes 1992) was also carried out on the Scheduled Area, which revealed a series of irregular linear features forming rough alignments (see Fig 3). No artefactual evidence was recovered from these linear features and they were interpreted as part of an early field system. The position and alignment of these features suggested that they were the cause of both the cropmarks seen from the aerial photography and the geophysical anomalies. Trenching outside the Scheduled Area revealed that further anomalies identified by geophysics and as cropmarks also proved to be either of geological origin or part of a system of field boundaries. As a result of this evaluation exercise, S.M.C. was given to extract gravel from the Scheduled Ancient Monument in 1992. This, however, had lapsed when the

quarry was ready to work in this area of the site. The recent application for S.M.C. required an archaeological watching brief to determine whether there were any remains surviving not identified in the evaluation.

4.0 Aims

The aim of the watching brief was to determine the nature and survival of any archaeological remains, not suggested by the previous evaluations, revealed during the stripping of soil, prior to the extraction of gravel from the area. A representative sample of archaeological remains encountered during the course of the watching brief would be identified and recorded through excavation. In the event of a significant discovery being made, an appropriate course of action was to be decided upon in consultation with the relevant authorities.

5.0 Method

The topsoil over the whole of Scheduled Ancient Monument ST 221 was stripped by a 360° tracked mechanical excavator fitted with a toothless ditching bucket and the spoil transported from the site by articulated dump trucks. The stripping of soil was continuously monitored by an appropriately qualified archaeologist. All archaeological features were recorded by means of scale drawings at 1:20 and 1:50, complemented with a photographic record of colour slide & monochrome film. A written record was made using *pro-formae* for features and contexts. Where no archaeological deposits were identified a record of the stratigraphy was made.

This forms the site archive, which at the time of writing is stored at Birmingham University Field Archaeology Unit.

6.0 Results (see Fig 4 and Plates 1 & 2)

Immediately below the topsoil was a mixed layer of yellow-grey, silty sand and gravel subsoil (1001). At both the northern and southeastern extremities of the site the subsoil became much greyer and siltier (1006). No evidence was encountered relating to the presence of the D-shaped Iron Age enclosure and thus the watching brief results do not contradict any of the findings from the previous evaluations of the site. A series of 13 linear features was identified aligned northwest-southeast across the whole of the excavated area. These features were cut into the silt-sand and gravel subsoil (1001) and were distinguished by a fill of reddish brown silt-clay (1003), immediately overlying a light grey silt-sand and gravel (1004). The features were identified as the remains of furrows from a former field system. The presence of these furrows also appears to directly correlate with evidence from the evaluation. Numerous shallow depressions containing peat were seen at both the northern and southeastern extremities of the site, which appeared to be related to former field boundaries. The topsoil (1000) consisted of clay-silt across the majority of the site becoming increasingly peat-like towards the southeast boundary, which, prior to excavation, was overgrown with scrub vegetation. Evidence for modern plough furrows could be seen to run northeast-southwest across the whole area and a maximum depth of topsoil across the entire area was recorded as 0.40m.

7.0 Discussion.

The removal of topsoil in the Scheduled Area did not reveal any evidence for the D-shaped enclosure, or any associated archaeological features, originally identified from aerial photographs. This result directly correlates with the findings of the previous trenching evaluation and the geophysical survey results. It is possible that the curving linear anomaly, forming the curved edge of the enclosure highlighted by the geophysical survey (Fig 3) is representative of the curving linear features identified as plough furrows. The evidence for a quite well-preserved, possible medieval, field system was seen across the whole area of excavation. The preservation of this series of furrows and their relationship with some of the geophysical anomalies and features, identified during previous evaluations of the site, suggest that rather than having been destroyed, the D-shaped enclosure did not exist. However, there is a possibility that the position of the enclosure has been incorrectly plotted or misinterpreted.

8.0 Acknowledgements

The watching brief was carried out by Kate Bain, who also wrote this report. The project was managed by Gary Coates. The illustrations and plates were prepared by Bryony Ryder.

Dr Andy Richmond commissioned and monitored the project on behalf of Phoenix Consulting Archaeology Ltd.

Thanks are due to Colin Rowe and Tom Bateson of Aggregate Industries Ltd for their assistance and co-operation.

Bill Klemperer monitored the project, on behalf of Staffordshire County Council, and Dr Paul Stamper, for English Heritage.

We are also grateful for the co-operation of the on site contractors, Power Plant Ltd.

9.0 References

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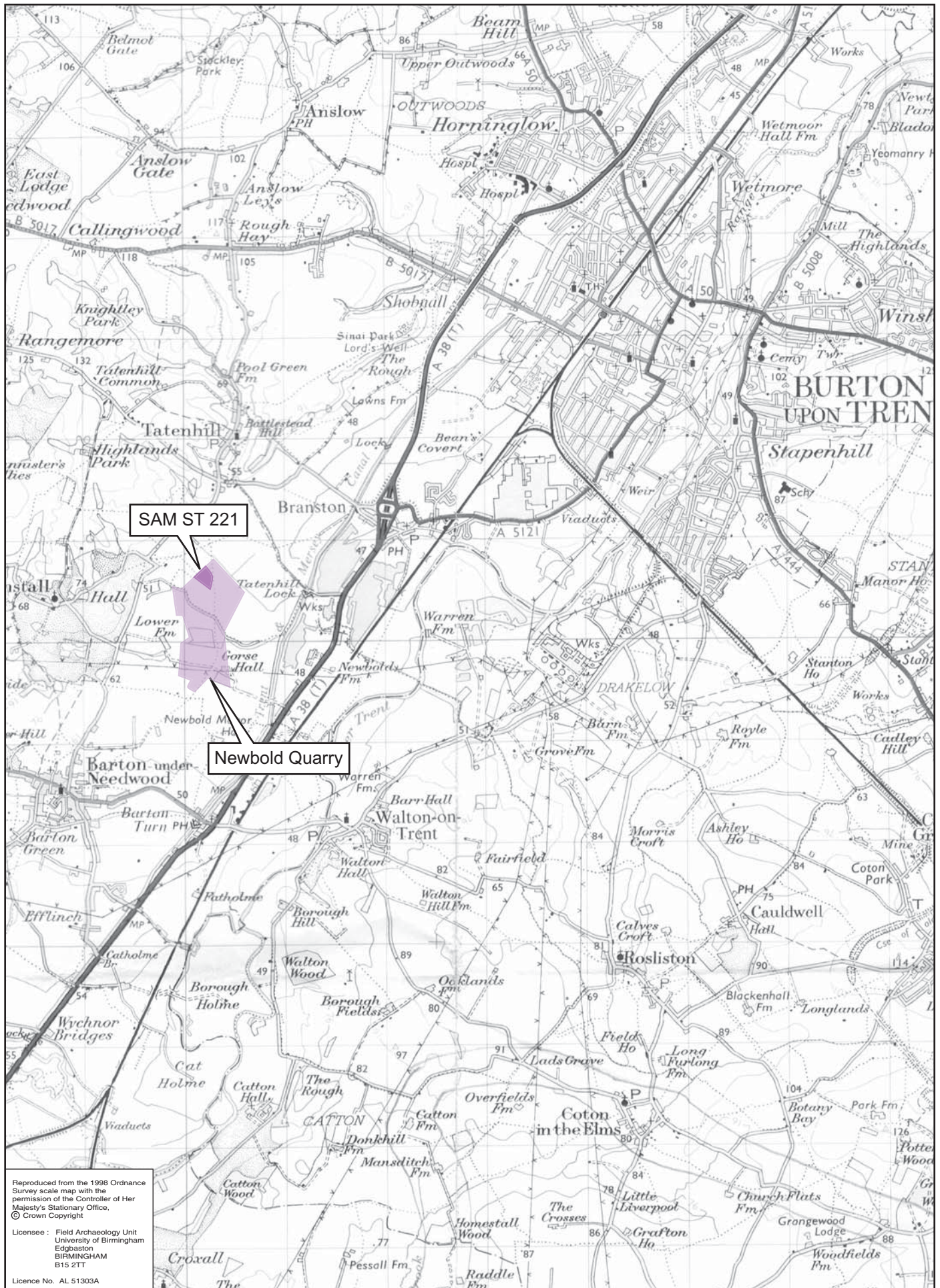
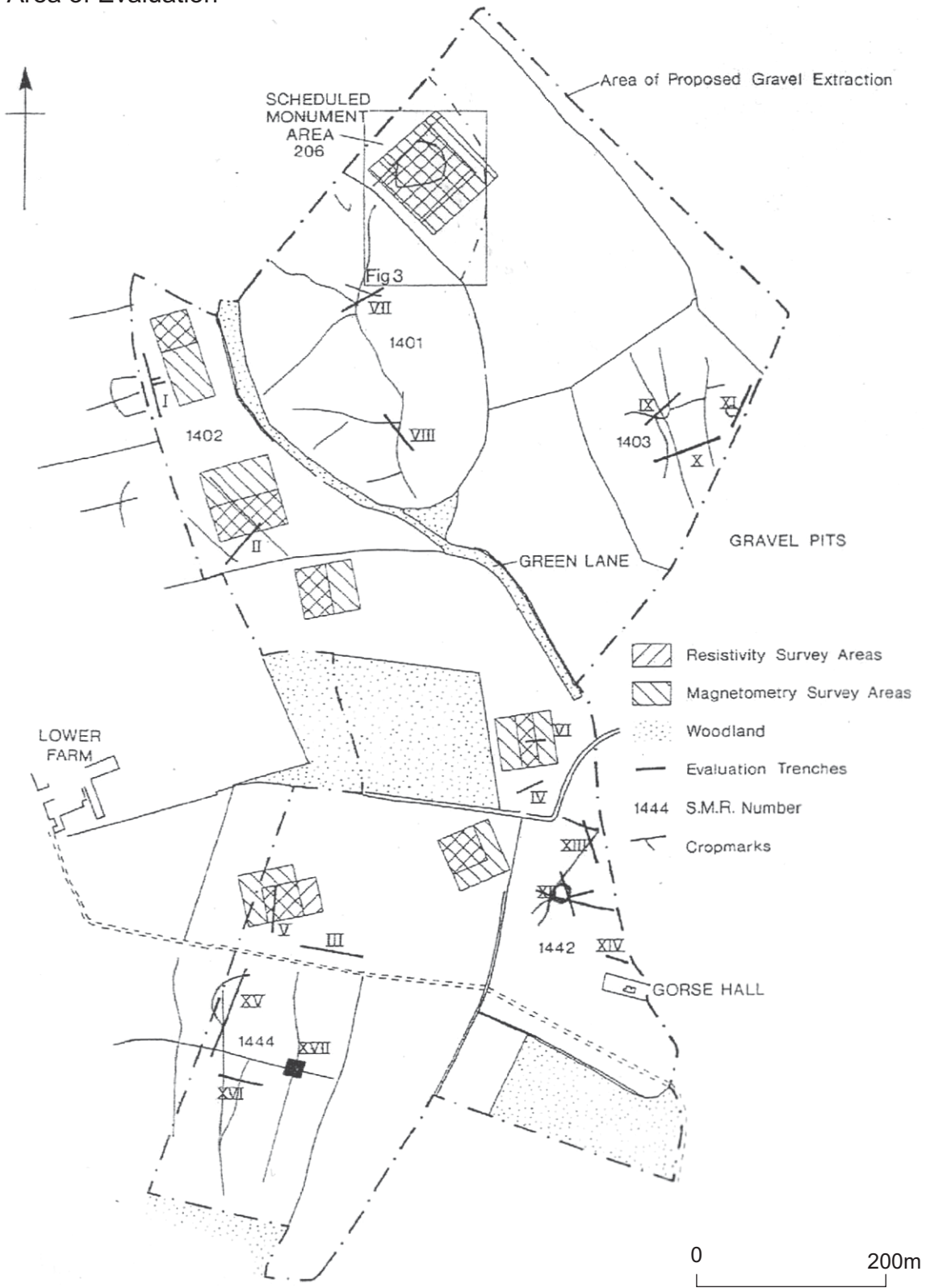


Fig.1

Newbold Gravel Pit 1991-2

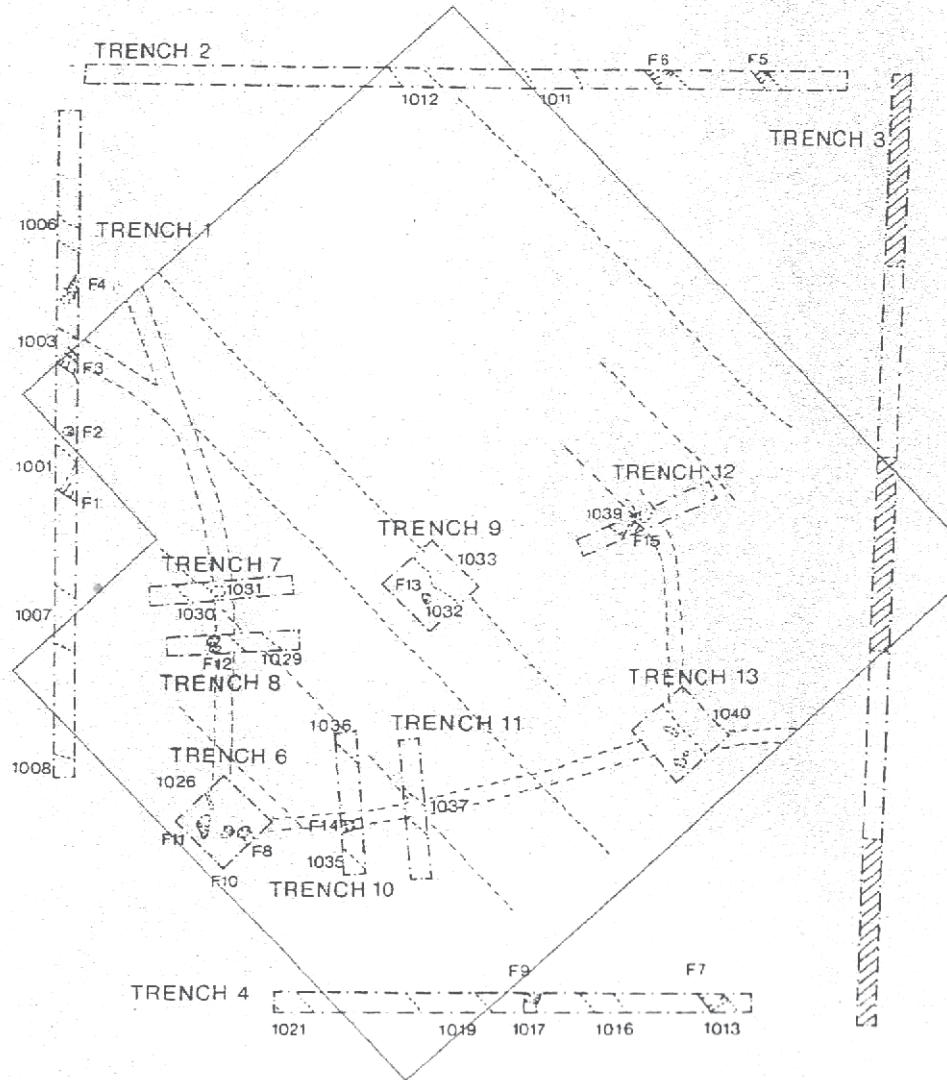
Area of Evaluation



Composite plan of quarry detailing previous evaluative works

Fig.2

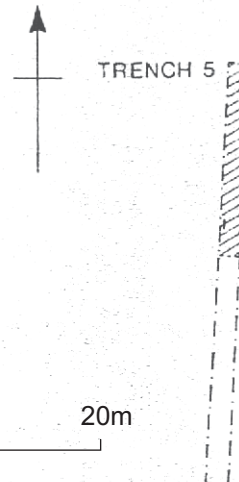
Newbold Gravel Pit 1991-2



Scheduled Area - Plan

Key:

- Archaeological Trenches
- Unexcavated Archaeological Features
- Excavated Archaeological Features
- ▨ Areas of Trenches 3 & 5 cleaned
- Limit of Resistivity Survey
- Geophysical Anomalies



0 20m

Plan of Scheduled Area detailing evaluation results

Fig.3

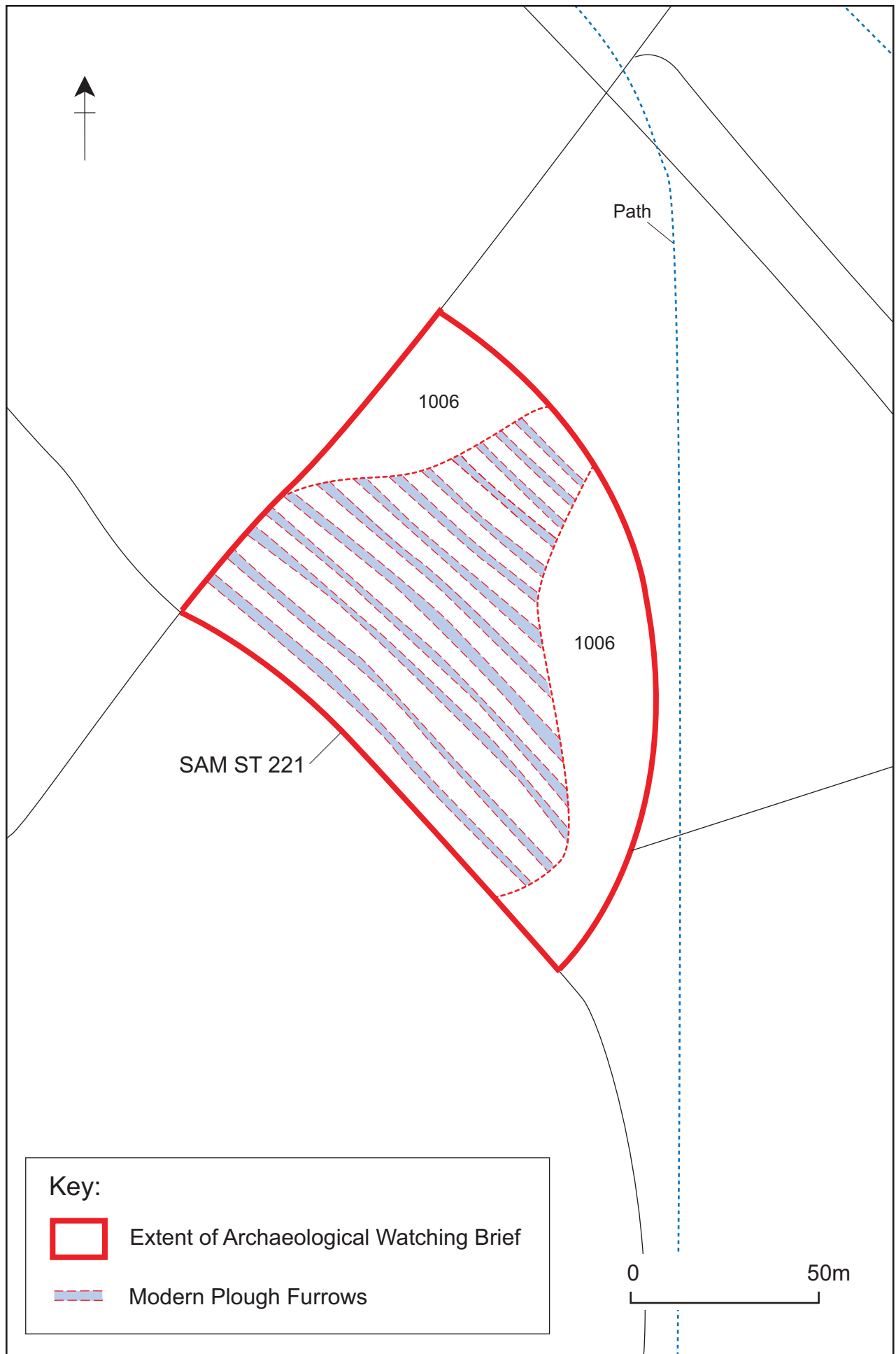


Fig.4



Plate 1



Plate 2