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Land at Moreton Business Park,
Moreton-on-Lugg, Herefordshire:

an archaeological watching brief
2006

Project No.1450

Land at Moreton Business Park, Moreton-on-Lugg, Herefordshire:
an archaeological watching brief 2006

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SUMMARY

Between May and November 2006 Birmingham Archaeology undertook an archaeological watching brief on land at Moreton Business Park, Moreton-on-Lugg, Herefordshire (centred on NGR SO 5050 4832) which was formerly part of a military base. The work was carried out to satisfy a condition of planning consent for the construction of business units and associated services. The watching brief was maintained during the groundworks relating to the development. The groundworks involved shallow excavations for the floor slabs and deep excavations for the associated drainage works.

Previous archaeological work on the site consisted of a program of test-pitting and deposit modelling by Worcestershire Archaeological Service and an archaeological evaluation involving trial-trenching by Birmingham Archaeology. Potentially significant archaeological features were revealed in two evaluation trenches: two east-west aligned shallow linear ditches, one containing sherds of Romano-British pottery, and a similarly aligned shallow linear ditch containing a partial horse skeleton, the size of which was consistent with an Iron Age or Romano-British date, together with an undated possible pit. Deep alluvial deposits sealed the natural subsoil and the archaeological features. The precise function of the features was unclear, although it seemed possible that the ditches could be associated with drainage and/ or agricultural activities. Similar features have been recorded in investigations to the north of the site and at the nearby Wellington Quarry.

During the watching brief three undated similarly orientated ditches, together with two undated possible ditch terminals or pits, sealed by deep alluvial deposits, were recorded. It is likely that these features could relate to similar Romano-British features recorded during the previous evaluation and be associated with drainage and/ or agricultural activities.

LAND AT MORETON BUSINESS PARK, MORETON-ON-LUGG, HEREFORDSHIRE: AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF 2006

1 INTRODUCTION

Between 26th May and 22nd November 2006 Birmingham Archaeology undertook an archaeological watching brief on land at Moreton Business Park, Moreton-on-Lugg, Herefordshire during groundworks associated with a proposed business park development. The work was commissioned by Great West 2003 Ltd to satisfy a condition of planning consent (Planning Application Ref. DC2004/1299/0), detailed in a brief by Herefordshire Council (Herefordshire Council 2005, Appendix), in accordance with Planning Policy Guidance note 16, Archaeology and Planning (DoE 1990). The work conformed to a Written Scheme of Investigation, agreed in advance with Julian Cotton, Archaeological Advisor, Herefordshire Council and conformed to guidelines set out by the Institute of Field Archaeologists (IFA 2001).

2 LOCATION AND GEOLOGY

The site is located within a former army base at Moreton-on-Lugg, Herefordshire (NGR SO 5050 4832, Figs. 1 and 2) and occupies approximately three hectares. The A49 runs north-south to the west and the River Lugg is situated approximately 1km to the east of the site.

The site lies within the floodplain of the River Lugg and is fairly flat, lying at 55m AOD. The underlying geology consists of sands and gravels overlain by alluvial deposits. The site formerly contained a spur of a former 1940s railway line serving the base, a locomotive shed (1960s), a petroleum store (1980s) and associated hardstanding/ access roads.

3 ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

A desk-based assessment of the former army base was carried out by BUFAU, (now Birmingham Archaeology) in 2002 (Nichol and Watt 2002). This assessment contains detailed background information about the site and the archaeological sites in the immediate vicinity. The vicinity of the study area has produced a wealth of archaeological information, from the Palaeolithic to the post-medieval period. Worcestershire Archaeological Service, formerly Hereford and Worcester County Council Archaeology Section, have carried out a series of archaeological investigations at Wellington Quarry, Marden, immediately to the north of the site. These yielded important remains dating to the prehistoric, Roman and medieval periods. The assessment concluded that the apparent lack of development at the site prior to its use as an army base, together with its proximity to known archaeological sites suggested good potential for the survival archaeological deposits.

The northern part of the former army base, within the Brooks Industrial Estate, was the subject of an evaluation by Worcestershire County Council Archaeological Service in 2003 (Griffin and Jackson 2003). Evidence of activity dating from the Mesolithic to the medieval period was recorded. A single pit dated to the Neolithic period was revealed. A large pit of Bronze Age date, interpreted as a funerary monument, was associated with possible cremations and postholes. Also a channel dug through a former watercourse, which had probably become silted up in the later Roman period, was interpreted as an attempt to maintain drainage at this time. A further drainage ditch of Roman date was also revealed. Alluvial

deposits sealing sand and gravel dated from the post-glacial period until at least the post-Roman period.

The southern part of the former army base, including the area of the present site, was the subject of a preliminary evaluation carried out by Worcestershire County Council Archaeological Service in 2003 (Miller 2003), prior to the determination of a planning application. Eleven trenches were excavated and although no archaeological features were encountered, alluvial deposits, up to 1.4m deep, which sealed sand and gravels were recorded. In some places these alluvial deposits were truncated by modern landscaping. The limited ambit of this evaluation meant that although general depths of alluvium were recorded, a further more detailed phase of evaluation of potential archaeological remains was required.

As part of the next phase of evaluation (Bain 2005) seventeen further trial-trenches were excavated in order to assess the nature and significance of any potential archaeological features or deposits. Archaeological features were revealed in two of the trenches. In one trial-trench at the west part of the site two parallel shallow linear ditches were recorded, one of which contained three abraded sherds of Romano-British pottery. In another trench, close to the northern limit of the site, a shallow linear ditch was recorded containing a partial semi-articulated horse skeleton. The size of the horse skeleton was consistent with an animal dating to the Iron Age or Romano-British periods. Close to the southern edge of this linear ditch was an undated feature, possibly a pit. The linear ditches were all on a similar alignment, all the features contained similar fills and were sealed by a similar depth of alluvium. This evidence suggested that all the features could date to the Romano-British period or perhaps earlier. The precise function of the features was unclear, although it seemed possible that the ditches could have been associated with drainage and/or agricultural activities. Similar features have been recorded in investigations to the north of the site and at the nearby Wellington Quarry.

4 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

The general aim of the archaeological watching brief is to identify and record archaeological features and deposits uncovered during groundworks associated with the development.

5 METHODOLOGY

An experienced archaeologist attended site to monitor construction groundworks. The groundworks observed included the stripping of topsoil, alluvium, and trenches cut into the natural subsoil. Following the stripping of topsoil the machined surface was inspected, and sufficient hand-cleaning was undertaken to facilitate the definition of archaeological, or possible archaeological features and deposits.

Where it was safe to do so, the archaeologist entered construction trenches for the purpose of undertaking hand-cleaning of the trench sides and base for the better definition of any archaeological features or deposits present. Some foundation trenches were not closely monitored as the trenches were too narrow to observe any potential archaeological features. This was agreed with the Archaeological Advisor, Herefordshire Council. No excavation of archaeological features, other than hand-cleaning, was undertaken. Where it was unsafe to enter deep trenches archaeological recording was confined to photography and the completion of pre-printed pro-formas.

If significant, or potentially significant groups of archaeological features were uncovered the Archaeological Advisor, Herefordshire Council was to be consulted immediately so that an alternative strategy for more detailed investigation could be devised, in consultation with the developer.

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. Finds were to be recovered by context and washed, marked and bagged. Where appropriate a selection of datable features were to be sampled objectively for the recovery of charred plant remains.

The full site archive for the watching brief and the previous evaluation consists of one box containing all artefacts recovered from the site during the evaluation and one box containing all paper records. The site archive will be prepared according to guidelines set down in Appendix 3 of the Management of Archaeological Projects (English Heritage 1991), the UKIC Guidelines for the Preparation of Excavation Archives for Long-term Storage (Walker 1990) and Standards in the Museum Care of Archaeological collections (Museums and Art Galleries Commission 1992). Finds and the paper archive will be deposited with the appropriate repository, subject to permission from the landowner.

6 RESULTS (Fig. 3)

6.1 Subsoil (natural)

In all the trenches the natural subsoil consisted of a reddish brown gravelly sandy clay (1805, 1903, 2004; Figs. 4 and 5, Sections 1-5). The surface of the natural subsoil was uneven and, in places, was disturbed by tree boles.

6.2 Summary of archaeological features and deposits

Five undated features of potential archaeological significance were recorded in two trenches. These features cut the surface of the natural subsoil and were filled with, and subsequently sealed by, alluvial deposits. These features were encountered in Trenches 19 and 20.

In Trench 19 was a northeast- southwest orientated ditch (1904; Fig. 4, Section 2 and Plate 1), 1.06 wide and 0.42m deep, with steep- sides and a slightly rounded base. It was filled with a mid pinkish-brown sandy clay (1905) containing a few small pebbles. Approximately 2.5m south of ditch 1904, was a similarly aligned ditch (1906; Fig. 4, Section 2 and Plate 2); 1.62m wide and 0.40m deep, with a gentle 'V'- shaped profile. It was filled by a grey-brown clay-silt alluvium (1902) which formed a layer that also overlay the natural subsoil 1903.

About 14m further south in Trench 20, was a northwest- southeast orientated ditch (2003; Fig. 4, Section 3 and Plate 3), 0.80m wide and 0.40m deep, with steep-sides and a flat base. It was filled by a reddish brown sandy clay (2002). Approximately 36m south of ditch 2003, was a pit or ditch terminal (2011; Fig. 5, Section 4 and Plate 4), 0.65 wide and 0.39m deep, with a 'U'- shaped profile extending west beyond the section of Trench 20. It was filled by the overlying alluvial clay silt (2010) that also sealed natural subsoil 2004 to a depth of 0.22m here. About 3m further south another pit or ditch terminal (2016; Fig. 5, Section 5) was recorded extending east beyond Trench 20. This was 1.20m wide and 0.40m deep with a shallow 'U'- shaped profile and was filled by the overlying alluvial layer 2010.

6.3 Overburden and topsoil

In all the trenches the natural subsoil was overlain by alluvial deposits. In Trenches 18– 21 the natural subsoil was overlain by brown alluvial clayey silts (1804, 1902, 1901 and 2010; Figs. 4 and 5 and 2104; not illustrated), 0.20-0.60m thick. In Trenches 20 and 21, this brown alluvium was partly overlain by a layer of upper alluvium (2001, Fig.5 and 2103, not illustrated) which was a grey-brown clay-silt, 0.10-0.60m thick.

On the east side of the Trench 20 (Fig. 5, Section 5), the upper alluvium 2001 was sealed by a black, ashy, modern deposits (2013 and 2014) and was cut by a foundation trench (2015) for a cement-bonded brick wall. The modern deposit 2013/4 that appeared to consist of ash or very similar material was often encountered at the same stratigraphic level over the majority of the site. Here it was overlain by a sequence of three deposits (2012), the main constituent of which was stone chippings. These deposits were all recorded as one context and date to the time of the military base or later. Their combined thickness was 0.30m and the surface of the uppermost layer of chippings formed the ground surface at the time of the excavations.

In Trench 22 the earliest alluvial deposit (2205) was of grey-brown clay-silt, 0.80m thick, containing a few fragments of twigs which was similar to the upper alluvium in Trenches 20– 21. Overlying 2205 were shallower deposits of brown alluvium (2204 and 2203), 0.05-0.42m thick. Frequent, charcoal flecks were present in 2204. In the latest deposit 2203, lenses of silt probably representing different episodes of inundation could be detected. In Trench 23 natural subsoil was overlain by light brown clayey silt alluvium (2304), 0.60m thick, which was sealed by a shallow layer of mid brown silt alluvium (2303), 0.11m thick.

In all of the trenches the latest alluvial deposits were directly overlain by modern overburden. This consisted of a layer of ash, re-deposited natural clay, and stone chippings (Figs. 4 and 5; 1809, 1900, 2000, 2006-2008 and 2012-2014). The total thickness of these modern deposits was in the range of 0.20-0.75m. On the sections that appear on Fig. 4, all of this modern material appears as a single context; the individual layers are only delineated on Fig. 5, (Sections 4 and 5). The black ashy material 2013 (Fig. 5, Section 5) contained fragments of coal, clinker and occasional fragments of machine-made red brick and was almost certainly coeval with the military base. With the exception of part of a cement-bonded brick foundation 2015, revealed in Trench 20, no remains of buildings belonging to the military base were encountered.

7 FINDS

Although all of the trenches were examined in detail and a considerable amount of cleaning was done by hand, only one stratified artefact was retrieved during the watching brief. This was a very small, abraded fragment of brick or tile recovered from the grey-brown alluvial layer 2103 near the west end of Trench 21.

8 DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

The findings from the watching brief appear to confirm those of the evaluation undertaken in 2005. The features of potential archaeological significance which were recorded during the watching brief were three ditches and two possible ditch terminals or pits, all undated. These features were cut from the surface of the natural subsoil and sealed by deposits of alluvium. The undated features recorded during the watching brief are likely to be related to Romano- British features, on

broadly the same alignment, identified during the previous evaluation and associated with drainage and/ or agricultural activities. Ditches 1904 and 1906 could be associated with cuts 707 and 709 recorded in Trench 7 during the evaluation, perhaps being part of a discontinuous ditch.

9 ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Andrew Horner of GreatWest 2003 Ltd, commissioned the project and thanks are due for his co-operation and assistance throughout the project. Thanks are also due to Bruce Jones and Colin Proctor of Building Design Practice Ltd. The project was carried out by Kevin Colls, Mark Charles and Andrew Gittens who also prepared this report. Thanks also go to Julian Cotton, who monitored the project on behalf of Herefordshire Council. The report was illustrated by Nigel Dodds, and edited by Laurence Jones who also managed the project for Birmingham Archaeology.

10 REFERENCES

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BRIEF FOR A PROGRAMME OF ARCHAEOLOGICAL WORK: PROPOSED BUSINESS PARK DEVELOPMENT AT MORETON ON LUGG, HEREFORDSHIRE.

Ref: SO502464

Date of issue: 27/07/2005

The County of Herefordshire District Council considers that this proposed development has significant archaeological implications, and has attached an archaeological condition to the grant of planning permission. The archaeological condition requires the developer to secure a programme of archaeological work (hereinafter referred to as "the project") in order to record the archaeological interest of the site.

The project will in summary comprise the following operations: preliminary investigative trenching; an archaeological watching brief on the ground-works; limited archaeological excavations (only if necessary); a complete post-excavation programme of assessment, archiving, interim reporting, and publication in accordance with English Heritage procedures.

The project must follow general archaeological best practice as defined by the Institute of Field Archaeologists, be in accordance with the broad framework provided by this brief, and comply with current Herefordshire Council archaeological standards.

The project must also be undertaken to the specified terms of a written scheme of investigation (project design) prepared by a professional archaeological contractor and submitted by the developer / on the developer's behalf. Archaeological work must be undertaken by a professional archaeological contractor.

The formal submission of a project design by or on behalf of the developer will be taken to mean that the developer, if undertaking the development referred to above, is under binding contract to discharge the project design in full. Project Designs must be approved by Herefordshire Archaeology in advance.

No development shall take place until all these matters have been addressed. If the required archaeological project is not properly and/or fully implemented, the developer may be in breach of the archaeological condition and be subject to enforcement action.

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1 THE DEVELOPMENT SITE

The development site is located within the former military camp at Moreton on Lugg, and is centred at NGR SO 502464 approximately. The development encompasses an area of 30 hectares approximately. The above definitions are for broad identification for the purposes of this brief only. Full details of the proposed development are obtainable from the developers, or agents acting on their behalf.

2 THE PLANNING BACKGROUND

Following archaeological assessment and evaluation (see Section 3), the development as proposed was granted planning permission. This permission was subject to a standard archaeological 'site investigation' condition. This condition follows national government guidance (PPG 16), and is in accordance with local government (Herefordshire) plans.

3 THE ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

The general area of the Lugg valley within which the development site is situated displays very high potential for particularly significant archaeological finds. The development site is thus very sensitive archaeologically. Extensive and ongoing archaeological work connected with the immediately adjoining 'Tarmac' gravel pits has uncovered a wealth of remains from many periods of history and prehistory. Some of these remains (for instance a recently uncovered Saxon mill) are of national importance. It is also considered that the palaeo-environmental interest of the area is of great significance.

Two archaeological studies specifically relating to the development site were submitted as part of the planning application for the development. Firstly there was a Desk-Based Assessment undertaken by the University of Birmingham. Secondly there was a short field evaluation report undertaken by the Historic Environment and Archaeology Service of Worcestershire County Council (Miller 2003, Report 1201). Although the scope of the latter did not extend to a comprehensive analysis of the likely archaeological remains on site, it was possible to outline broad depths of deposit and degrees of truncation for the purposes of determining the application.

This section (3) is intended as a concise summary of what currently appear to be the main archaeological themes, and does not constitute an anticipation of what might be found.

4 THE AIMS OF THE PROJECT

The broad aims of the project are to record, prior to and during development, all archaeological materials present on the site. The primary intention will be to make a satisfactory detailed record of those archaeological materials to be destroyed or damagingly affected by development. There is a secondary intention, however, to make concise records of other relevant features of the site, in order to put the work in context. The work will also aim to result in the deposition of a satisfactory archaeological archive and production of a satisfactory publication. The archaeological project will not be regarded as complete until satisfactory deposition and publication has been achieved.

5 THE SCOPE OF THE PROJECT

The project will consist of the following items:

- Preliminary investigative trenching in order to properly understand the potential of specific areas, and to formulate an appropriate strategy for subsequent operations. It may be (for example) that particular areas are demonstrated to be of such low potential that parts of the watching brief [below] will not be necessary.
- An archaeological watching brief on all ground-disturbing operations forming part of the development, except where Herefordshire Archaeology agree otherwise in advance. It is assumed that during the course of this watching brief, the archaeological contractor may need to make occasional small scale/short duration interventions in order to properly undertake the recording of archaeological features of moderate value.
- If (and only if) discoveries made during the watching brief warrant it, full archaeological excavation of any high value archaeological remains that are present within the direct scope of the development or any associated ground-works.
- Full and proper analysis, processing, and deposition of all retained archaeological materials and archives of any kind deriving from the works, and proper reporting and publication of the results.
- It is anticipated that the interim report on the findings, and the publication of a summary note in the *Transactions* of the Woolhope Club and in *West Midlands Archaeology*, will probably meet the publication requirement. However, if particularly significant finds are made, *more detailed* publication in a recognised period Journal, or in some other form, may be necessary.

6 THE PROJECT METHODS

The project will be undertaken in accordance with the Herefordshire Archaeology document *Standards for Archaeological Projects in Herefordshire (Issue 1)*, and to the relevant standards of the Institute of Field Archaeologists (IFA). Submitted project designs must indicate in detail the methods to be followed.

7 SPECIAL REQUIREMENTS

There are no special requirements in relation to this particular development proposal.

8 DISCLAIMER

This brief has been prepared to the best of the information currently available to Herefordshire Archaeology, but despite our best efforts should not be assumed to be complete, consistent or completely accurate. If the applicant, the applicant's agent, or anybody else acting on behalf of the applicant or otherwise involved in the project, has supplementary or contrary information which may be relevant to the site or the archaeological project, they should contact the archaeological advisor (see below) as soon as possible. Herefordshire Archaeology has advised that the project described by this brief should take place, and will monitor archaeological standards during the full course of the work, but is not *responsible* for the project, particularly as regards site hazards and health and safety matters.

9 FURTHER INFORMATION

Further information can be obtained from **Herefordshire Archaeology, Planning Services, Herefordshire Council, PO Box 144, Hereford HR1 2YH Fax 01432 383354**

Correspondence would normally be through **Mr Julian Cotton, the Archaeological Advisor** (at the above address, on telephone number **01432 383350**)

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The Institute of Field Archaeologists	0118 3786446
Herefordshire County Records Office	01432 260750



Fig.1

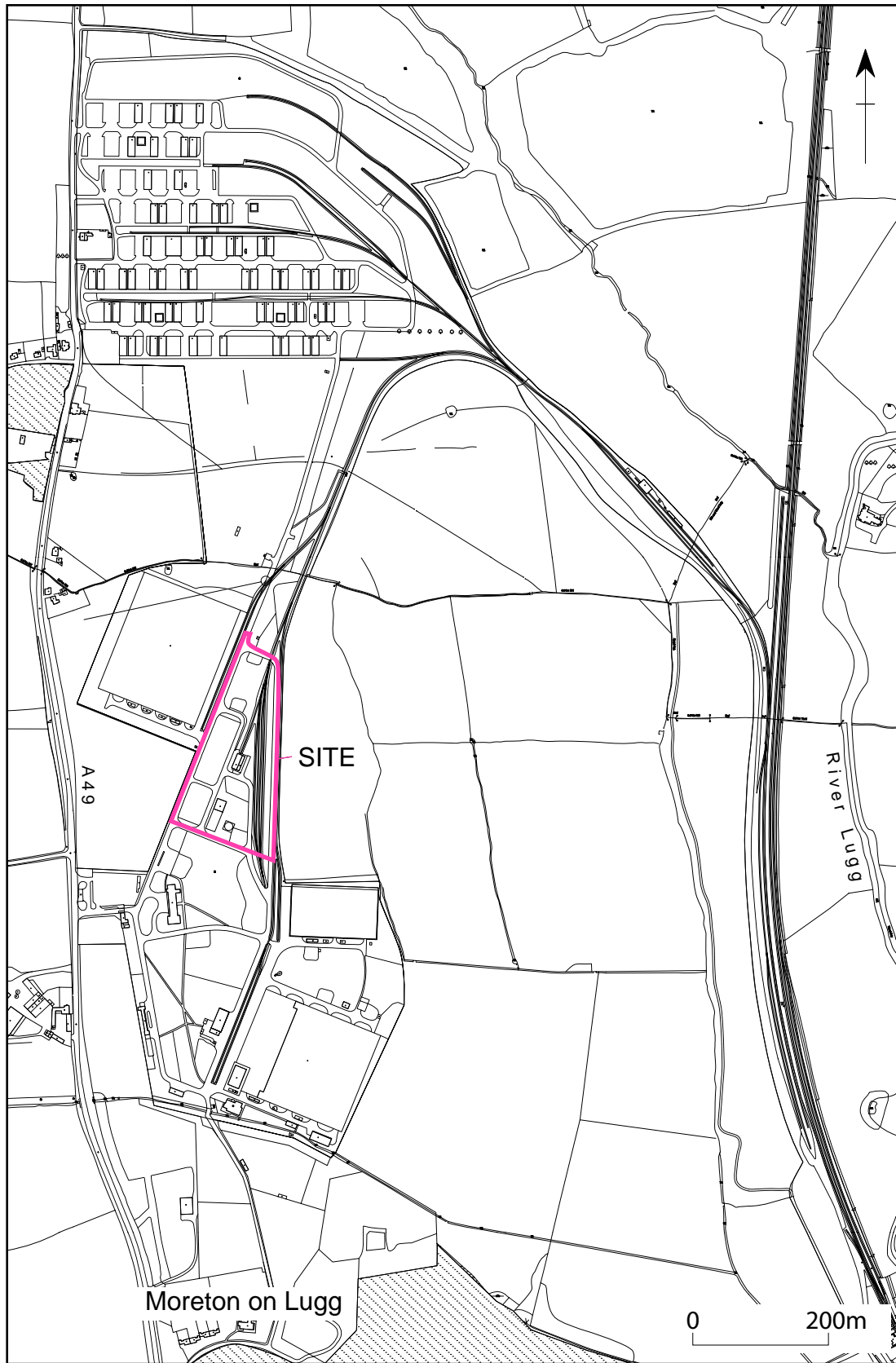


Fig. 2

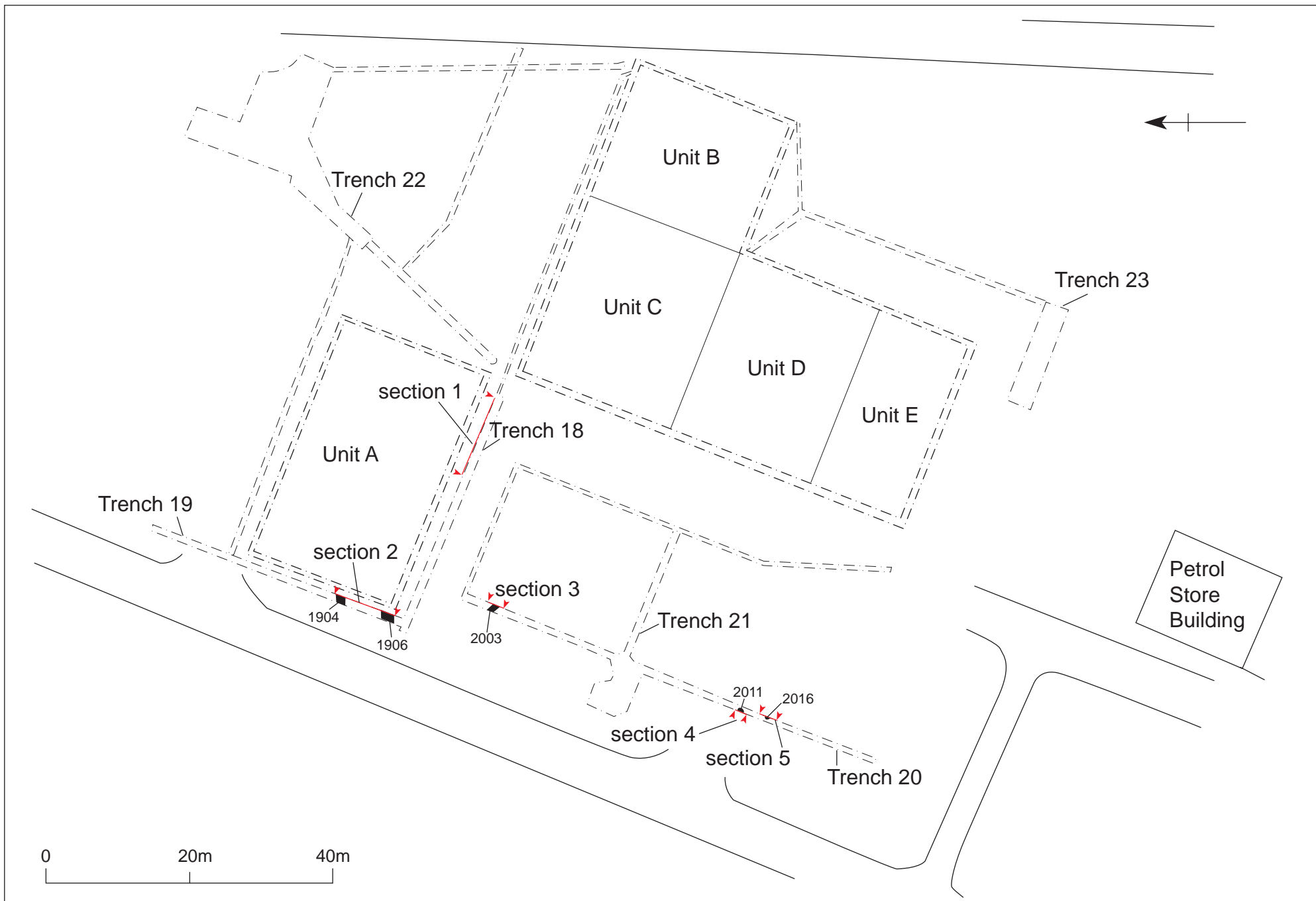
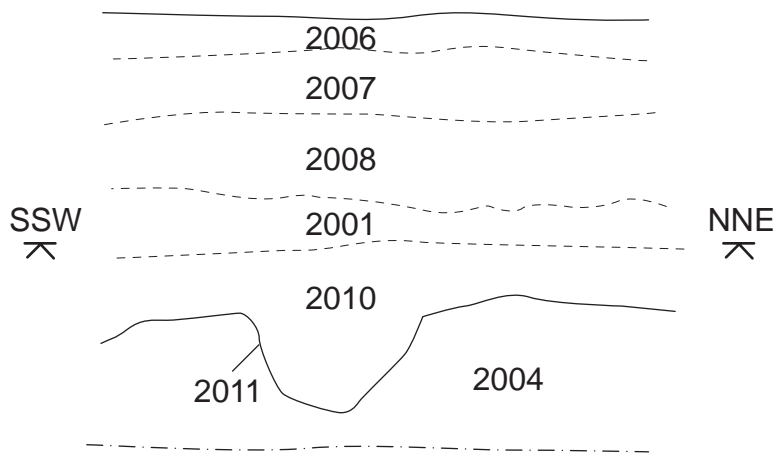


Fig.3

Trench 20 section 4



Trench 20 section 5

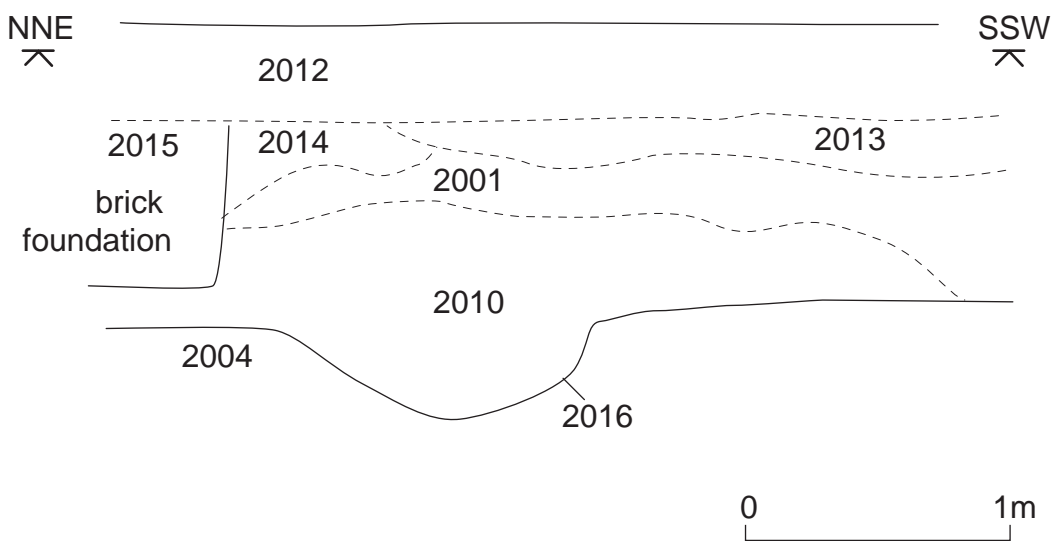


Fig.5



Plate 1



Plate 2



Plate 3



Plate 4