

Archaeological Watching Brief
at
Shakenhurst Hall,
Shakenhurst, Cleobury Mortimer,
Worcestershire



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Archaeological Watching Brief at Shakenhurst Hall, Shakenhurst, Cleobury Mortimer, Worcestershire

Graham Arnold (project leader)

With contributions by Dennis Williams

Summary

An archaeological watching brief was undertaken at Shakenhurst Hall, Shakenhurst, Cleobury Mortimer, Worcestershire (NGR SO 6725 7300). It was undertaken on behalf of Mr G. Braithwaite, who intends to construct single storey extensions to the side and the rear of the hall and carry out internal alterations for which a planning application has been submitted and approved by Malvern Hills District Council (Reference MH/11/0521).

Shakenhurst Hall (WSM 034610) is a 17th Century country house within a landscaped park that was re-modelled in 1798. It is constructed of red brick and was the seat of the Meysey - Wigley family.

The works monitored included three trenches located to the north and the south-west sides of the house. A sandstone wall foundation was recorded in a trench on the north side of the existing building which may have formed a part of an earlier hall. Less substantial footings were recorded to the north of the hall which corresponds to outbuildings depicted on the 1904 Ordnance Survey map. Other works were excavated through made ground and a number of modern drains were recorded.

Report

1 Background

1.1 Reasons for the project

An archaeological watching brief was undertaken at Shakenhurst Hall, Shakenhurst, Cleobury Mortimer, Worcestershire (NGR SO 6725 7300). It was commissioned by Mr G. Braithwaite, who intends to construct single storey extensions to the side and the rear of the hall and carry out internal alterations for which a planning application was submitted and approved by Malvern Hills District Council (reference MH/11/0521). A programme of archaeological works was a condition of this consent.

The proposed development site is considered to include a heritage asset with archaeological interest, the significance of which may be affected by the application (reference WSM03610).

The project conforms to a brief prepared by Mike Glyde, Historic Environment Planning Advisor, Worcestershire County Council (WCC 2011) and for which a project proposal (including detailed specification) was produced (WHEAS 2011).

The project also conforms to the *Standard and guidance for an archaeological watching brief* (IfA 2008) and *Standards and guidelines for archaeological projects in Worcestershire* (WCC 2010).

The event reference for this project, given by the HER is WSM 46051.

2 Aims

The aims of the archaeological watching brief were to record any evidence of earlier phases of the hall exposed during the works, including Post-medieval and earlier structures.

3 Methods

3.1 Personnel

The project was undertaken by Graham Arnold BA, MSc; who joined Worcestershire Archaeology in 2009 and has been practicing archaeology since 2005 and Simon Sworn, BA, who joined Worcestershire Archaeology in 2003 and has been practising archaeology since 1999. The project manager responsible for the quality of the project was Tom Rogers MSc; Illustrations were prepared by Carolyn Hunt. Dennis Williams contributed the finds analysis.

3.2 Documentary research

Prior to fieldwork commencing a search was made of the Historic Environment Record (HER) (WCC 2013).

3.3 Fieldwork strategy

A detailed specification has been prepared by Worcestershire Archaeology (WA 2012a).

Fieldwork was undertaken between 19 October 2011 and 10 January 2013. The site reference number and site code is WSM 46051.

Three areas, amounting to just over 120m² in area were excavated over the site. The location of the trenches is indicated in Figure 2.

All groundworks were carried out by a tracked 360° tracked mini excavator employing a toothless bucket and under archaeological supervision. Subsequent excavation was undertaken by hand. Clean surfaces were inspected and selected deposits were excavated to retrieve artefactual material as well as to determine their nature. Deposits were recorded according to standard Worcestershire Archaeology practice (WA 2012a).

3.4 Structural analysis

All fieldwork records were checked and cross-referenced. Analysis was affected through a combination of structural, artefactual and ecofactual evidence, allied to the information derived from other sources.

3.5 Artefact methodology, by Dennis Williams

3.5.1 Artefact recovery policy

The artefact recovery policy conformed to standard Service practice (WA 2012).

3.5.2 Method of analysis

All hand-retrieved finds were examined.

3.6 Statement of confidence in the methods and results

The methods adopted allow a high degree of confidence that the aims of the project have been achieved.

4 The application site

4.1 Topography, geology and archaeological context

The Historic Environment summary for the site describes Shakenhurst as 'set within a region of rolling hard rock plateau made up of mixed shale and sandstone with poorly drained soils. The historic landscape is made up of nucleated settlement with some scattered farms. Fields are generally irregular and predominantly small and pastoral. Discrete blocks of ancient woodland remain largely centred on watercourses including the large Wissett's Wood.'

Stray finds are testament to habitation in the area from the Neolithic period onwards. Other periods indicated from finds evidence include the Bronze Age, Iron Age, Roman, Medieval and Post medieval periods. Little archaeological fieldwork has been carried out in this area.

The manor of Shakenhurst was first recorded in the late 13th century ('Suttenhurst'), probably originally forming part of the Domesday manor of Bayton (WSM 26785). It was held by Elmley Castle in 1513 and of the manor of Abberley in 1565 and 1622. The landscaped park and house has belonged to the Meysey-Wigley family since the mid 14th Century (Brooks & Pevsner 2007, 126).

The present red brick house of Shakenhurst Hall (WSM03610) dates to about 1700 but was substantially remodelled by Samuel Knight of Kidderminster in 1798-9. It is a Grade I listed building. Additional rear accommodation to the hall was provided in 1812 by William Hams. Behind the house are 17th Century L shaped brick stables which were remodelled in the 18th Century, with a brick – walled Kitchen Garden dating to 1804. (Brooks & Pevsner, 2007, 126). The walled garden (WSM 45670) is depicted on the First Edition OS map dating to 1884-1885.

The Hall is set within a large park (WSM 28831) first depicted on Walker's map of 1835. The park includes a large fishpond to the east of the house (WSM 33433) fed by a watercourse (WSM 33432) on which a dam or sluice is visible on LiDar data.

Possible extraction pits (WSM47516) also visible from LiDar data have been identified in Walk Coppice to the north of the hall either side of the a former branch line of the Severn Valley railway (WSM15050) which ran along the wooded valley which defines the northern edge of the estate.

4.2 Current land-use

The land use is mixed farming with a settlement pattern of farmsteads and clusters of wayside dwellings. These are associated with a moderate to high level of dispersal and a small to medium scale field pattern. Tree cover comprises relic patches of ancient woodland, often associated with densely scattered hedgerow oaks and streamside tree cover.

5 Structural analysis

The trenches and features recorded are shown in Fig 2. The results of the structural analysis are presented in Appendix 1.

5.1.1 Phase 1: Natural deposits

The natural deposits consisted of firm red clay marl. These were recorded at between 0.80m and 1.30m below ground level.

5.1.2 Phase 2: Medieval deposits

A sandstone wall (context 107) orientated North – South and 0.31m in height by 0.73m wide was uncovered in Trench 1 on the north east side of the existing building (Plates 3 and 4). The wall consisted of 2-3 courses of stonework bonded with orangey brown silty clay. A compacted gravel floor or yard surface was recorded on the south side of the sandstone wall underlain by compacted clay levelling material.

5.1.3 Phase 3: Post-medieval deposits

Overlying the medieval sandstone wall was a post medieval robber trench containing undiagnostic post-medieval material.

5.1.4 Phase 4: 19th or 20th Century deposits

Further modern walls relating to late 19th / early 20th Century additions to the south west wing of the Hall were found in Trench 3 with footings up to 1.5m deep cut through made ground (Plate 9). They consisted of machine-made red bricks, with cement mortar and were 0.44m wide. These are visible on the 1904 edition OS map and appear to represent an outbuilding or single storey extension to the main building (fig 6). Disturbed garden soil and backfilled material from service trenches and drainage were also recorded in each of the trenches.

6 Artefact analysis, by Dennis Williams

The assemblage from this site was extremely limited, comprising one fragment of post-medieval, hand-made roof tile (probably 17th- early 19th century in date), four undiagnostic brick/tile fragments, part of an oyster shell (all from context 101), and one unidentifiable, corroded piece of iron (context 105). Modern porcelain and brick fragments were also recovered from the made ground of Trench 3 on site but not retained due to their modern date.

7 Synthesis

7.1 Medieval

Although no dateable material was recovered it is thought that, from the location and scale of the stone wall (context 107) recorded to the east of the hall it is likely to have formed part of an earlier medieval building which pre-dated the current hall. A possible floor or yard surface was also recorded on the south side of the wall which consisted of a thin gravel layer (context 104) bedded into a compact clay levelling material (105). It was not clear from the sample whether this surface was internal or external.

7.2 Post-medieval

A later robber trench cutting down onto the medieval wall was recorded and undiagnostic post-medieval ceramics and ceramic building material were recorded from the reworked topsoil and made ground in the excavations to the north and south-west of Shakenhurst Hall.

8 Publication summary

Worcestershire Archaeology has a professional obligation to publish the results of archaeological projects within a reasonable period of time. To this end, Worcestershire Archaeology intends to use this summary as the basis for publication through local or regional journals. The client is requested to consider the content of this section as being acceptable for such publication.

An archaeological watching brief was undertaken at Shakenhurst Hall, Shakenhurst, Cleobury Mortimer, Worcestershire (NGR SO 6725 7300). It was undertaken on behalf of Mr G. Braithwaite, who intends to construct single storey extensions to the side and the rear of the hall and carry out internal alterations for which a planning application has been submitted and approved by Malvern Hills District Council (Reference MH/11/0521).

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9 Acknowledgements

Worcestershire Archaeology would like to thank the following for their kind assistance in the successful conclusion of this project, Mr George Braithwaite and Mr Mike Glyde, Historic Environment Planning Officer, Worcestershire County Council.

10 Bibliography

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English Heritage 2011 *The setting of heritage assets*, English Heritage

IfA 2008 *Standard and guidance for an archaeological watching brief*, Institute for Archaeologists

WA 2012a *Manual of service practice, recording manual*, Worcestershire Archaeology, Worcestershire County Council, report **1842**

WHEAS 2011 *Proposal for an archaeological watching brief at Shakenhurst Hall, Shakenhurst, Cleobury Mortimer, Worcestershire*, Worcestershire Historic Environment and Archaeology Service, Worcestershire County Council, unpublished document dated 9 September 2011, P3761

WCC 2010 *Standards and guidelines for archaeological projects in Worcestershire*, Planning Advisory Section, Historic Environment and Archaeology Service, Worcestershire County Council unpublished report 604, revised December 2010

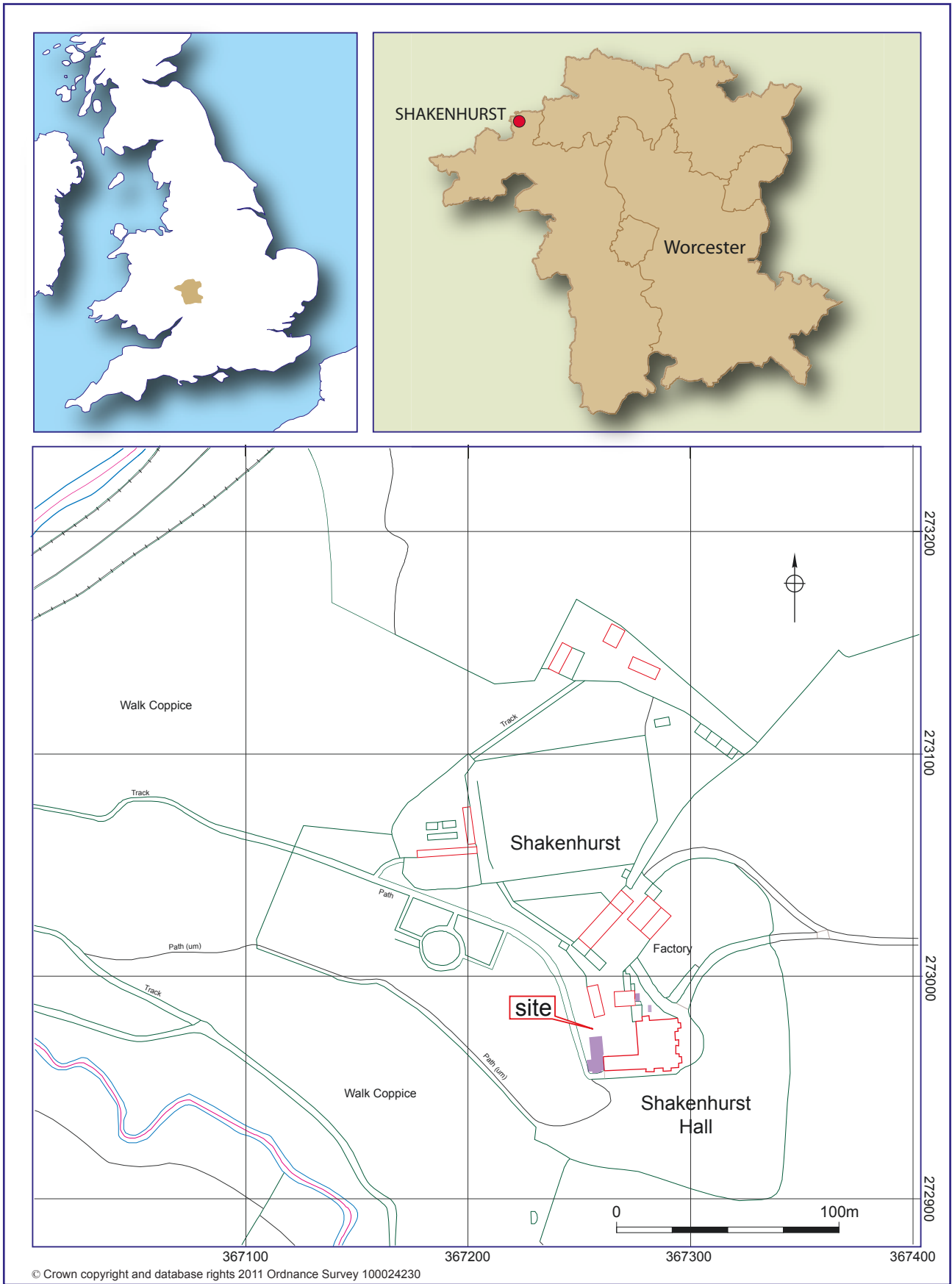
WCC 2011 *Requirements for a programme of archaeological work at Shakenhurst Hall, Shakenhurst, Cleobury Mortimer, Worcestershire*, Information and Advisory Section, Archive and Archaeology Service, Worcestershire County Council unpublished document dated 5 September 2011

WCC 2013 *Historic Environment Record Search: Shakenhurst Hall, Cleobury Mortimer
Worcestershire*. Information and Advisory Section, Archive and Archaeology Service,
Worcestershire County Council unpublished document dated 16 January 2013



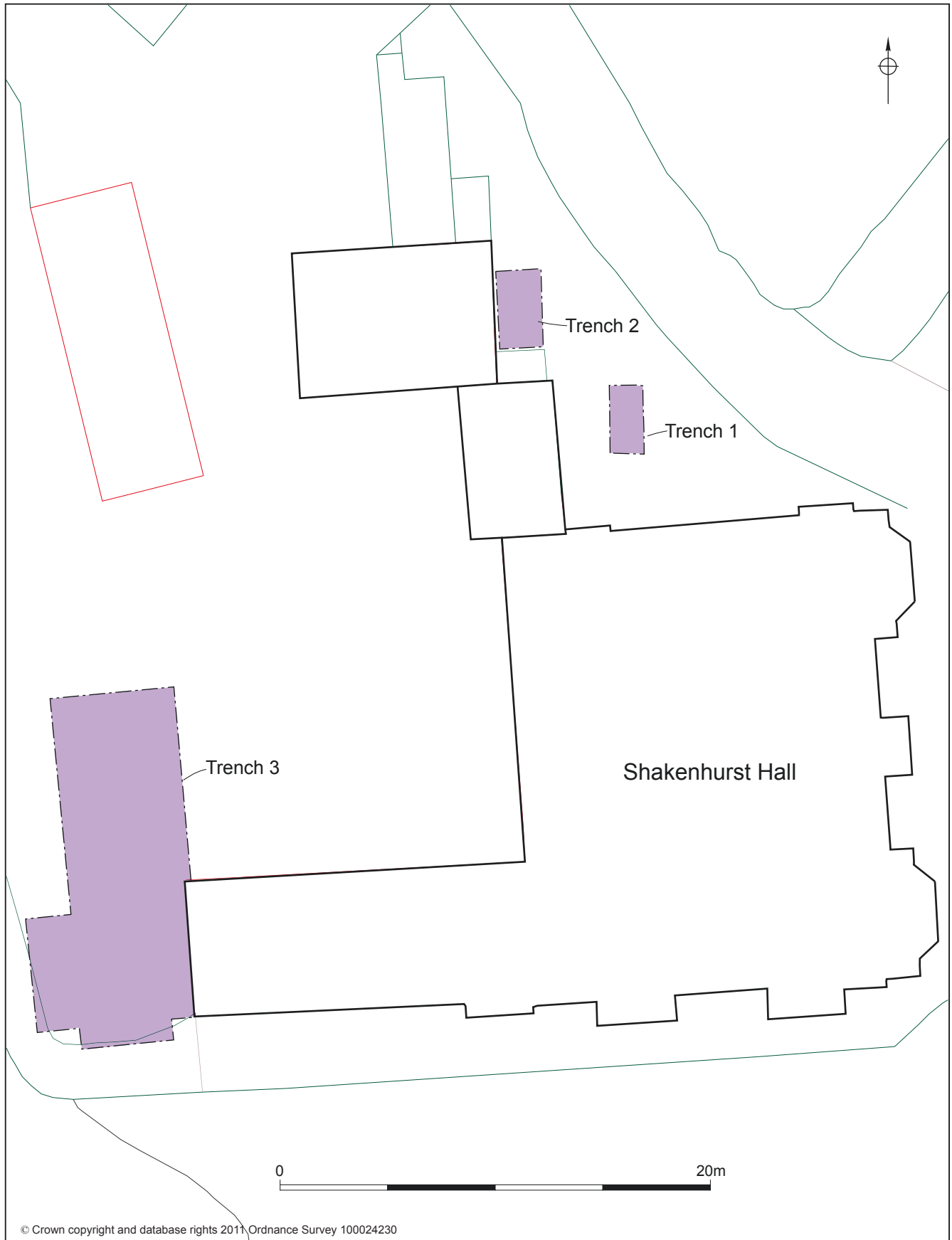
Figures





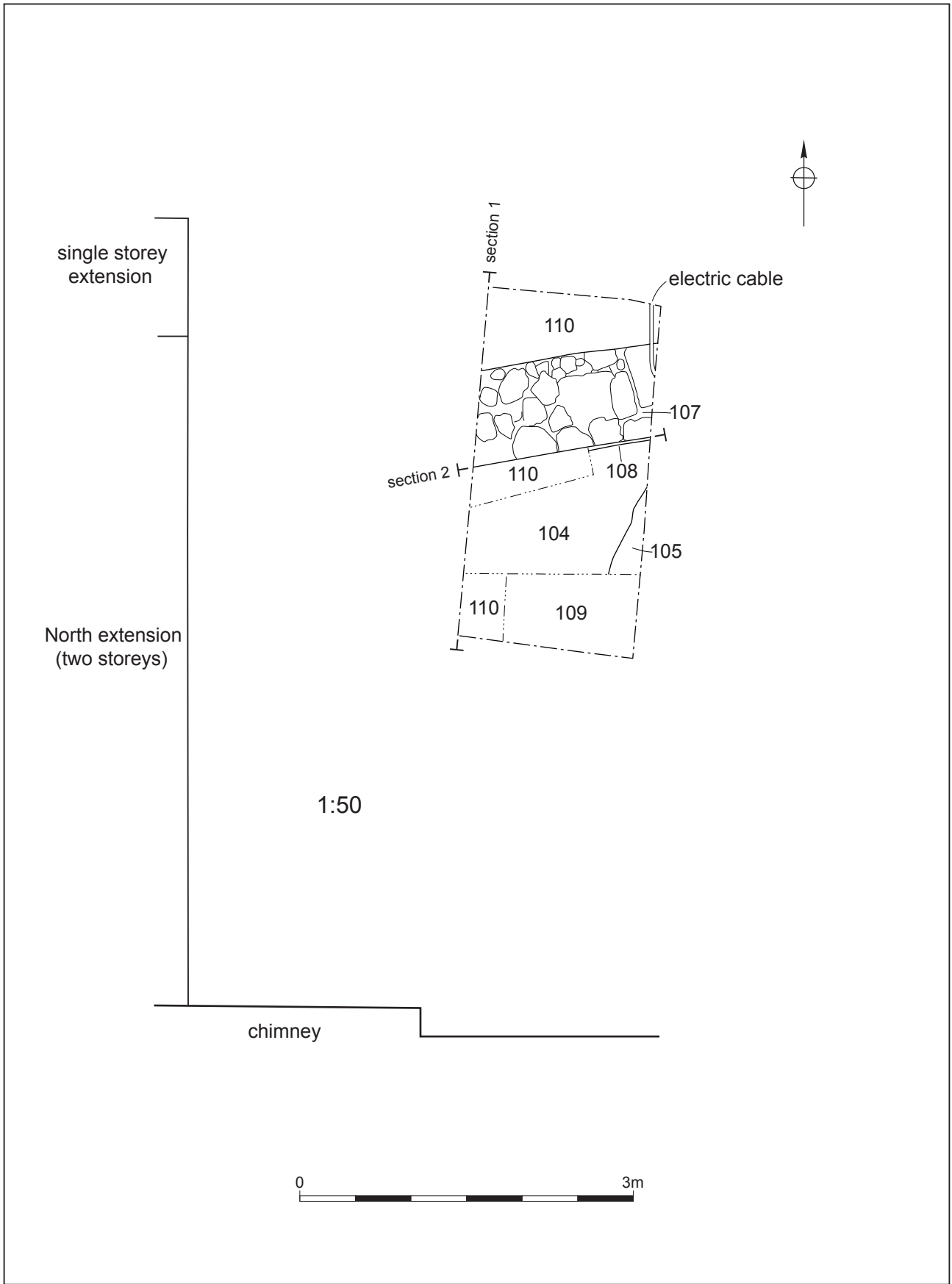
Location of the site

Figure 1



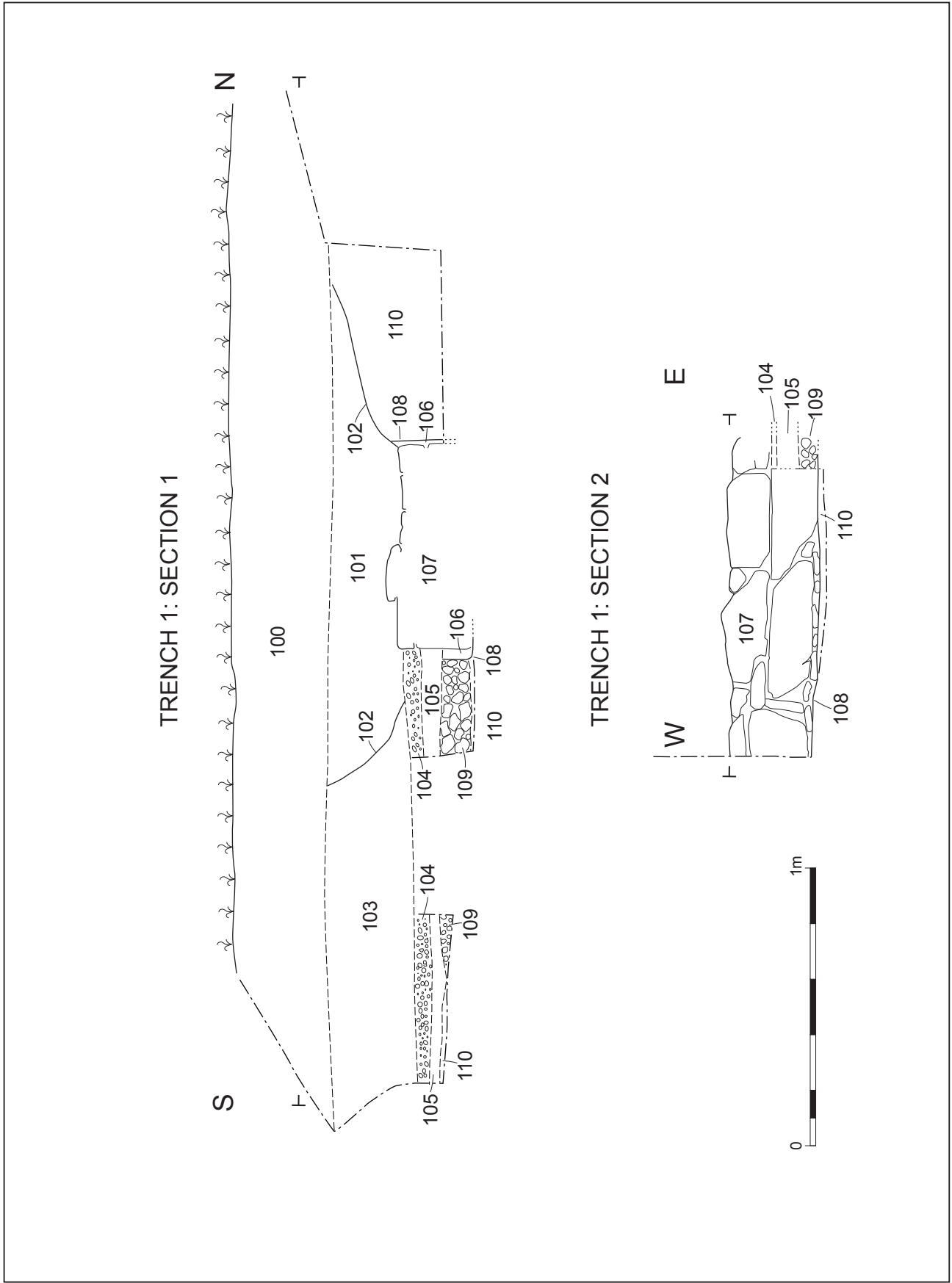
Trench location plan

Figure 2



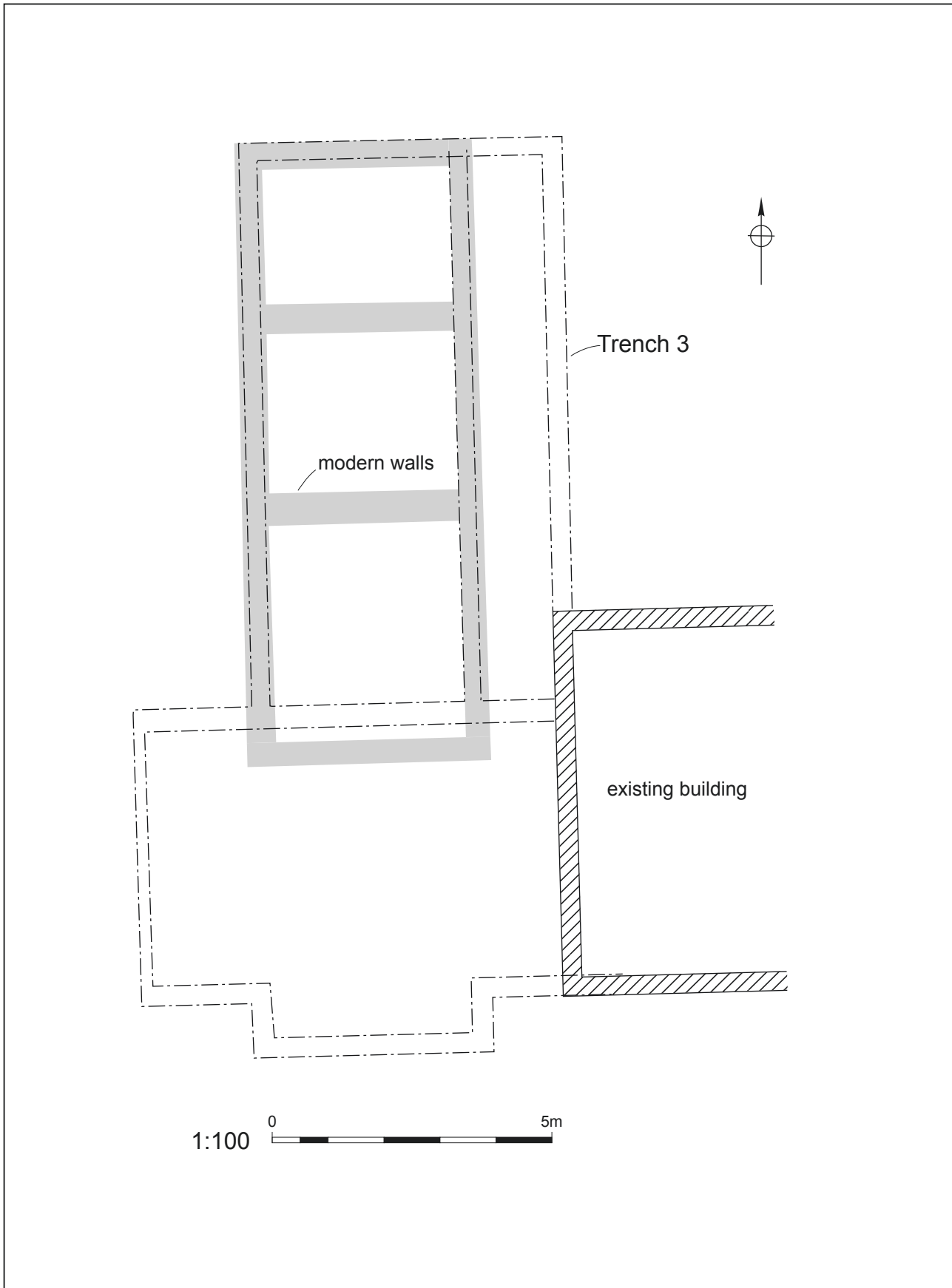
Plan of Trench 1

Figure 3



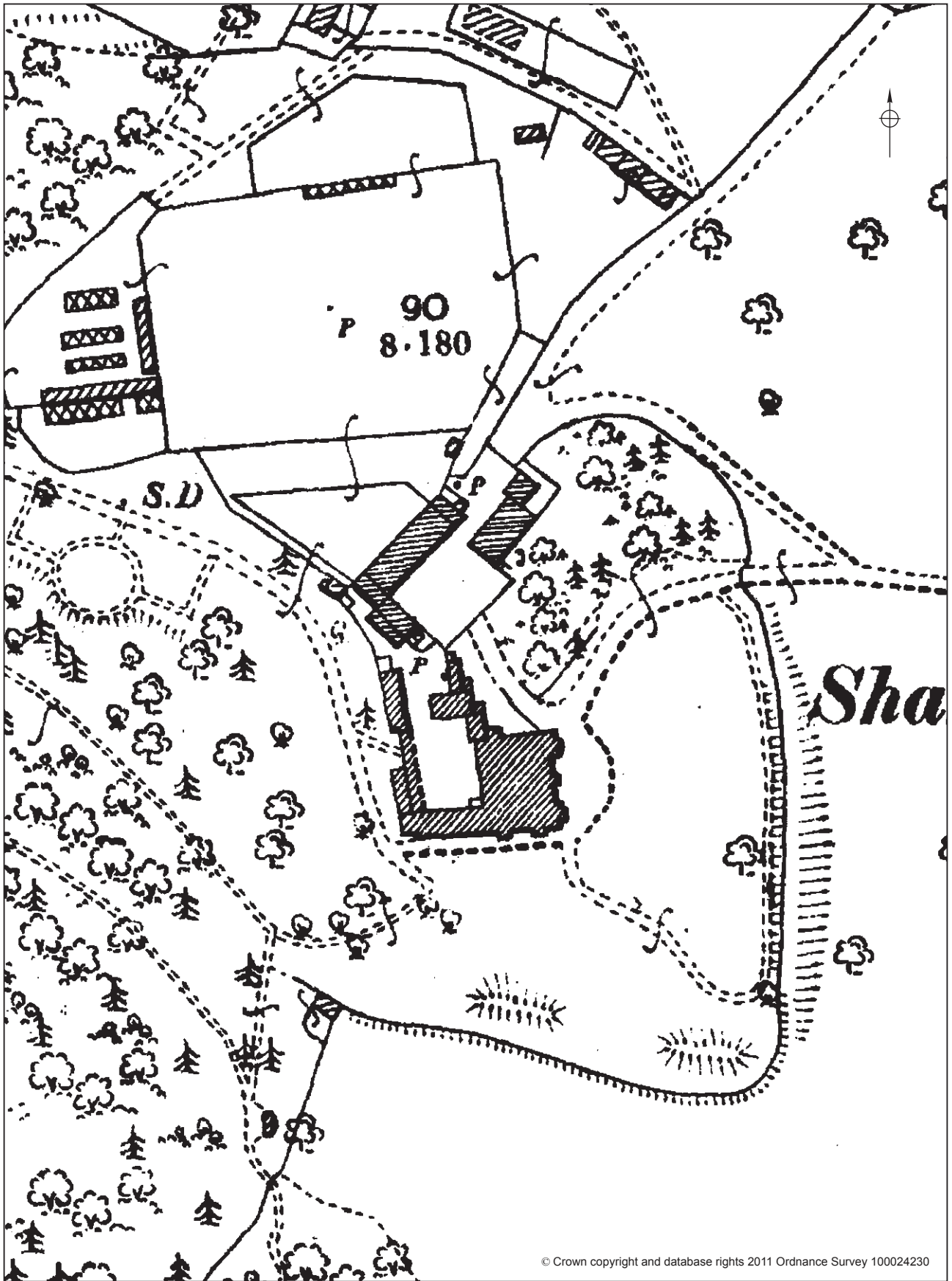
Trench 1: sections

Figure 4



Trench 3 plan

Figure 5



Extract from 1904 OS map

Figure 6

Plates



Plate 1 Shakenhurst Hall from the East



Plate 2 Location of trench 1



Plate 3 Trench 1 medieval wall foundation in relation to the existing building



Plate 4 Sandstone wall foundation and possible floor / yard surface



Plate 5 Location of Trench 2 before excavation



Plate 6 Example of trench 2 disturbed topsoil



Plate 7 East facing section of trench 2



Plate 8 Location of South-west single storey extension



Plate 9 Modern 20th Century wall foundation in trench 3



Plate 10 Location of South-west single storey extension foundation trench



Plate 11 Trench 3 disturbed ground with modern drainage and hardcore

Appendix 1 Trench descriptions

Trench 1

Maximum dimensions: Length: 3.00m Width: 1.80m Depth: 0.80m

Orientation: North - South

Main deposit description

Context	Classification	Description	Depth below ground surface (b.g.s) – top and bottom of deposits
100	Topsoil / garden soil modern	Loose dark brown/black clayey loam with occasional small sub-rounded pebbles with heavy rooting and vegetation on top. High level of contamination. Cut by one modern water pipe trench.	0 – 0.33m
101	Backfill of robber cut	Firm, light brown silty clay with frequent sub-angular broken sandstone pieces	0.33 – 0.63m
102	Cut of robber trench	Linear cut with sharp, steep concave sides and a flat base along the top of the wall. Orientated East –West and filled by 101	0.33 – 0.63m
103	Buried soil horizon	Loose, mid brown clayey loam with occasional small sub-rounded pebbles and heavy rooting activity.	0.33 – 0.65m
104	Yard / floor surface	Loose light orangey brown small sub-rounded gravels within an occasional clayey matrix and sand.	0.64 – 0.70m
105	Clay bedding layer for floor surface	Very compact light orangey brown silty clay with occasional charcoal flecks. Directly below 104	0.70 – 0.77m
106	Clay packing around construction cut	Firm mid orangey brown sandy clay. Similar to 105	0.60 – 0.80m
107	Sandstone Wall footing - medieval	Sandstone wall with various sized slabs up to 0.50m x 0.30m x 0.20m in dimensions. The stones are roughly hewn and 2 to 3 courses high.	0.49 – 0.80m
108	Construction cut for East-West wall 107	Linear construction cut with straight vertical sides and a flat base. Cut by 102 and filled by wall 107 and clay packing 106	0.44 - 0.80m

Context	Classification	Description	Depth below ground surface (b.g.s) – top and bottom of deposits
109	Layer – stone hardcore under yard surface?	Compact blueish grey broken sandstone pieces.	0.68 -0.80m
110	Natural	Firm brownish red clay / marl with occasional sub-rounded gravels. Not excavated.	0.80m

Trench 2

Maximum dimensions: Length: 5.00m Width: 2.00m Depth: 0.40m Bucket width 0.50m

Orientation: East - West

Main deposit description

Context	Classification	Description	Depth below ground surface (b.g.s) – top and bottom of deposits
200	Reworked Topsoil	Dark brown silty clay with frequent plaster, broken brick fragments and rooting - modern	0 – 0.40m
201	Natural	Compact firm reddish brown cohesive clay marl with occasional sub-rounded gravels	0.40 – 0.80m

Area 3

Maximum dimensions: Length: m Width: m Depth: 1.50m

Orientation: East - West

Main deposit description

Context	Classification	Description	Depth below ground surface (b.g.s) – top and bottom of deposits
300	Gravel surfacing	Loose grey gravel type 1 hardcore and a layer of clean orange clay as a bedding material.	0 – 0.20m
301	Made ground	Mixed hardcore and dark brownish orange silty clay with frequent loose brick, mortar and concrete and occasional modern porcelain ceramic material.	0.20 – 0.80m
302	Natural	Pale orange to pink/orange with patches of grey compact bedded sand and soft sandstone. Contains occasional silt channels and patches of grey silty material. Cut by water pipe trench and modern posthole.	0.80 – 1.30m
303	Modern Wall Foundations	Modern wall foundations with cement mortar and machine made bricks, measuring 0.22m (l) x 0.12m (w) x 0.08m (d). The walls were 1.50m deep, with a concrete base and made a rectangular building with a two internal walls. Present in north side of trench 3 (see fig 5)	0.20 – 1.50m
304	Service drain fill	Backfilled material covering modern drainage across the site, including ceramic drain pipes and frequent 20 th Century porcelain within the fill. Present in south-west side of trench 3	0.20 – 0.80m
305	Cut for modern drainage	U – shaped cut for modern drainage trench cut into natural clay and through the made ground	0.20 – 0.80m
306	Structure	Modern brick drain	0.60 – 1.00m

Appendix 2 Technical information

The archive (site code: WSM 46051)

The archive consists of:

- | | |
|-----|---------------------------------------|
| 10 | Context records AS1 |
| 6 | Field progress reports AS2 |
| 1 | Photographic records AS3 |
| 106 | Digital photographs |
| 1 | Drawing number catalogues AS4 |
| 5 | Scale drawings |
| 1 | Context number catalogues AS5 |
| 3 | Trench record sheets AS41 |
| 1 | CD-Rom/DVDs |
| 1 | Copy of this report (bound hard copy) |

The project archive is intended to be placed at:

Worcestershire County Museum
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