ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF AT SALE GREEN, HUDDINGTON, WORCESTERSHIRE

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With a contribution by Angus Crawford

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Project 2642
Report 1307
WSM 34023

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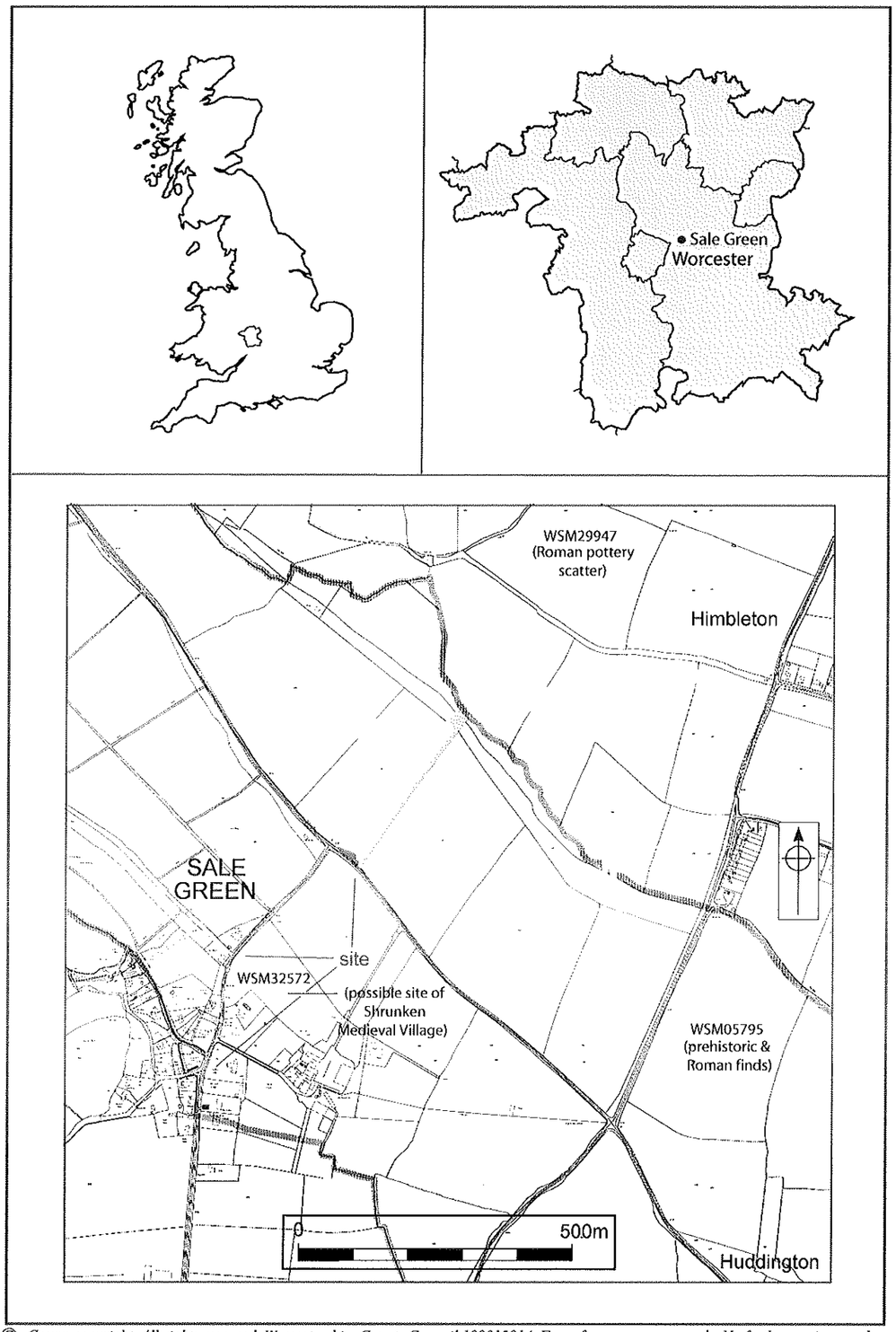

Location of the site and other sites in the vicinity. *Figure 1*

Archaeological watching brief at Sale Green, Huddington, Worcestershire

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Background information

Client	Severn Trent Water
Site address	Sale Green, Huddington, Worcestershire
National Grid reference	SO 9354 5860
Sites and Monuments Record reference	WSM 34023
Brief	HEAS 2004a
Project design	HEAS 2004b
Project parameters	IFA 1999

Previous archaeological work on the site

There has been no previous archaeological work undertaken on site.

Previous archaeological work on associated sites

The village of Sale Green lies in secluded countryside approximately 5.5 km to the south-east of Droitwich, Worcestershire. The underlying geology consists predominantly of limestone beds set within Jurassic and Cretaceous clay or mudstone overlain by slowly permeable fine loamy clay soils (Mackney *et al* 1983).

There have been no archaeological excavations within the hamlet of Sale Green, yet information contained within the SMR suggests the potential for deposits in the vicinity of a prehistoric, Romano-British, medieval or post-medieval nature (WSM 05795, 29947 and 32572).

Various artefacts from the Roman period have been discovered close to Sale Green, these include a pottery scatter indicative of Romano-British settlement, discovered in 1999 (WSM 29947) from the fields between Phepson Manor and the Little Brook. A considerable quantity of Roman pottery was also found in a limestone quarry in the fields to the north of Trench Lane, between Shaftland Cross and Huddington, in 1865 (WSM 05795). Prior to that a number of prehistoric artefacts, consisting of implements made from red deer antlers, were found in the same location in the 17th century (VCH III, 392).

Trench Lane itself may be of some antiquity, *trenche* or 'cutting' probably relates to a path or track cut through a wood (Mawer and Stenton 1927). The lane forms part of the road from Droitwich through Huddington to Stratford was probably part of a saltway (*ibid*). The original trackway may though have passed through the wood slightly to the south of the present lane. A present track, though not a Holloway, still runs through the wood parallel to the road and marks the parish boundary.

A recent borehole survey of the site did not indicate any peat deposits associated with the stream, however waterlogged deposits may have still provided valuable environmental evidence (HEAS 2004a).

Aims

The aim the watching brief was to observe the areas of ground disturbance associated with the removal of topsoil and subsoil and the excavation of a series of service trenches during construction of a new sewerage treatment plant. The observations would be carried out in order to locate

archaeological deposits, and to determine their extent, state of preservation, date and type, as far as reasonably possible. The trenches were located within the centre of the village, the southern edge of Trench Wood and in fields 4151 and 7438, to the north-east of Trench Lane.

Methods

General specification for watching brief	CAS 1995
Sources consulted	Sources cited by the SMR 1st Edition OS Map 1885
Dates of fieldwork	16th November - 6th December 2004
Area of deposits observed	*c* 3722m². Indicated on Fig 2
Dimensions of excavated areas observed	Services length 610m width 22m (max) depth 2m (max)

Statement of confidence

Observation of the excavated areas was undertaken during and after machine excavation. Initially the topsoil and subsoil was removed by a 360 degree mechanical excavator using a 1.6m toothless bucket. The exposed surfaces were sufficiently clean to observe any well-differentiated archaeological deposits. After these surfaces had been sufficiently examined a 2m (max) deep service trench was excavated using a 0.65m toothed bucket. Access to, and visibility of deposits allowed a high degree of confidence that the aims of the project have been achieved. For safety reasons the service trenches were not entered, though it was clear from the initial soil removal that no underlying archaeological deposits were present.

Artefact report (by A Crawford)

Artefact recovery policy

All artefacts from the area of salvage recording were retrieved by hand and retained in accordance with the service manual (CAS 1995 as amended).

Method of analysis

All hand retrieved finds were examined. A primary record was made of all finds on a Microsoft Access 2000 database. Artefacts were identified, quantified and dated. Pottery was examined under x20 magnification and recorded by fabric type and form according to the fabric reference series maintained by the service (Hurst and Rees 1992).

Artefactual analysis

A summary of the artefacts recovered can be seen in Table 1. The assemblage recovered from the watching brief came from one stratified context (501) and two unstratified/surface find contexts (100 and 200). Recovered artefacts dated from the Roman to modern periods. Pottery was the largest group recovered consisting 44% of the assemblage. Ceramic building material, as brick, was the second largest totalling 27% of all material recovered.

The pottery was identified and grouped by fabric (see Table 2). The majority of the sherds were undiagnostic but could be dated between the mid 1st and 20th century by fabric type. Other finds consisted of ceramic field drain, fragments of clay pipe stem, slag, an iron nail, an iron cold chisel and unidentifiable corroded iron.

Discussion of the artefacts

The discussion below is a summary of the finds and associated location or contexts by period. The importance of individual finds has been commented upon as necessary.

Roman

A single rim sherd of Severn Valley ware (fabric 12, context 501) was the only recovered Roman material. It was in highly abraded condition and of small size and therefore could not be identified to type. Due to its condition it could only be broadly dated to the middle 1st – 4th century. Its highly abraded state and that it was found associated with post-medieval brick fragments within the same context indicates that this sherd is residual.

Medieval / early post-medieval

A single sherd of medieval /post-medieval pottery was contained within the assemblage. While its condition was poor it could be identified as a small sherd of oxidized glazed Malvernian ware (fabric 69, context 100) dating from the late 13th – early 17th century. The absence of further medieval remains suggests that this sherd is residual and could also be of an early post-medieval manufacture rather than medieval.

Late post-medieval/ modern

The late post-medieval/modern assemblage amounted to twenty-six recovered pottery sherds. The dominant fabric was miscellaneous late stoneware (fabric 81.4, context 200) dating to the late 19th – early 20th century. Further fabrics included five sherds of post-medieval red ware (fabric 78; two from context 100 and three from context 200) dating to the 17th –18th century; one sherd of post-medieval buff ware (fabric 91; context 200) dating to the 18th century; one sherd of Nottingham stoneware (fabric 81.3; context 100) dating to the 19th – early 20th century; six sherds of modern stone china (fabric 85; three from context 100 and three from context 200) dating to the late 19th – early 20th century and a single sherd of porcelain (fabric 83; context 100) datable to the same period. A single sherd of cream ware (fabric 84; context 200) could be more precisely dated to 1750 –1780.

Seventeen fragments of brick were identified as being post-medieval in origin but they were undiagnostic and could only be broadly dated to within this period. Two clay pipe stem fragments (context 100) were also datable to the late post medieval period.

Significance

The examination of all recovered finds and the results from quantification indicate that there is no evidence for significant on-site activity during the Roman through to the modern period. All finds from the early post-medieval to modern period appear to be the result of manuring or the discard of general rubbish. This is further evidenced through the recovery of slag, which can be deposited on fields to act as an agricultural soil improver.

Context	Material	Type	Total	Weight (g)
100	Brick	Post-medieval	7	13
100	Ceramic	Drain	4	95
100	Clay pipe	Stem	2	3
100	Iron	Tool	1	65
100	Pottery	Medieval-Post-medieval	1	1
100	Pottery	Modern	4	4
100	Pottery	Post-medieval	2	7
100	Slag	Unidentified	1	35
200	Brick	Modern	1	39
200	Brick	Post-medieval	4	22
200	Ceramic	Drain	1	7
200	Iron	Fastner	1	2
200	Iron	Unidentified	2	3
200	Pottery	Modern	12	163
200	Pottery	Post-medieval	8	102
200	Slag	Unid	7	84
501	Brick	Post-medieval	5	47
501	Pottery	Roman	1	5

Table 1: *Quantification of evaluation assemblage*

Context	Fabric	Fabric name	Total	Weight (g)
100	69	Oxidized glazed Malvernian ware	1	1
100	78	Post-medieval red ware	2	7
100	81.3	Nottingham stoneware	1	2
100	85	Modern stone china	3	2
200	100	Miscellaneous post-medieval wares	3	41
200	78	Post-medieval red ware	3	43
200	81.4	Miscellaneous late stoneware	8	140
200	83	Porcelain	1	1
200	84	Creamware	1	5
200	85	Modern stone china	3	22
200	91	Post-medieval buff ware	1	13
501	12	Severn Valley ware	1	5

Table 2: *Quantification of assemblage fabrics*

Date range	Material	Total	Weight (g)	Specialist report?	Important research assemblage?
	Iron	3	68	N	N
	Slag	8	119	N	N
Mid 1C-4C	Pot	1	5	Y	N
Late13C-Early17C	Pot	1	1	Y	N
16-18C	Brick	4	22	N	N
16-19C	Brick	5	47	N	N
17-18C	Brick	7	13	N	N
17-18C	Pot	2	7	Y	N
17-19C	Claypipe	2	3	N	N
1750-80	Pot	1	5	Y	N
18-19C	Ceramic	5	102	N	N
18C	Pot	4	56	Y	N
19-20C	Brick	1	39	N	N
19-20C	Iron	1	2	N	N
19-20C	Pot	8	27	Y	N
19C	Pot	3	41	Y	N
20C	Pot	8	140	Y	N

Table 3: *Summary of the assemblage*

Discussion

Although a considerable area of soil was removed during the course of the project, allowing a through inspection of the underlying deposits, it was clear that there were no significant features of archaeological importance. Various reasons may be cited for the lack of any visible archaeological remains. The trench located within the centre of the village (Area 4) appeared to show only recent make-up layers for the present track surface (contexts 400 and 401). These recent layers consisted of modern building rubble and their deposition may have truncated any earlier remains. The trench here was dug towards the edge of the trackway so earlier undisturbed deposits may exist under the middle of the track. The trenches on the edge of Trench Wood (Areas 2 and 3) revealed no archaeological remains either. The existence of the wood appears to date back to at least the time of the Crowle Charter of 840 (Somerton 1996) and there is no reason the suppose that this area had not always been wooded, with the felling of the trees and the conversion to fields a recent activity, indicated by finds from this area being almost solely from the post-medieval/modern period. The fields to the north-west of Trench Lane (Areas 1 and 5) provided the greatest likelihood of preserved buried remains, though none were identified during the programme of work. The lack of any substantial finds along with a single small fragment of well abraded Roman pottery suggests that this area has always been utilised for a prolonged agricultural usage rather than for settlement purposes.

In addition to no visible archaeological remains, extensive metal detecting produced no obvious non-modern finds throughout the length of the works. Although within Area 2 a small assemblage of slag was retrieved though is likely to have deliberately deposited in recent times as a soil improver to the heavy clays of this area.

Conclusions

The lack of potential archaeological remains within the extent of the watching brief implies that this area of land had been wooded or used essentially for agricultural purposes. A thin scattering of Roman, medieval and post-medieval pottery throughout the surrounding fields is broadly consistent with a background scatter representing farming activity in the Roman and later periods. The

occupation associated with this activity would be located elsewhere. The artefactual material would have been moved into surrounding fields as a result of concentrating domestic rubbish in midden heaps, which are subsequently spread about the arable fields. This practice is authenticated historically for the medieval period (Astill and Grant 1988), and has been demonstrated for the Roman period by Gaffney and Tingle (1989). The presence of these finds within Trench 5 potentially suggests that this field has been utilised for agricultural purposes for a longer period than those nearer Trench Wood.

Publication summary

The Service has a professional obligation to publish the results of archaeological projects within a reasonable period of time. To this end, the Service 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 on behalf of Severn Trent Water at Sale Green, Huddington, Worcestershire, (NGR ref SO 9354 5860; SMR ref WSM 34023). The watching brief was conducted during the removal of topsoil and subsoil and the excavation of service trenches for the construction of a new sewerage treatment works and associated fowl water pipes. The groundworks were observed, and revealed that there were no significant archaeological remains present. The examination of all recovered finds indicated that there is no evidence for significant on-site activity during the Roman through to the modern period. All finds from the early post-medieval to modern period appear to be the result of manuring or the discard of general rubbish, implying a prolonged agricultural usage for this area.

Archive

Fieldwork progress records AS2	7
Photographic records AS3	4
Digital photographs	112
Trench record sheets AS41	5
Abbreviated context records AS40	3
Drawings	8
Boxes of finds	1
Computer disks	1

The project archive is intended to be placed at:

Worcestershire County Museum
Hartlebury Castle, Hartlebury
Near Kidderminster
Worcestershire DY11 7XZ
telephone 01299 250416

Acknowledgements

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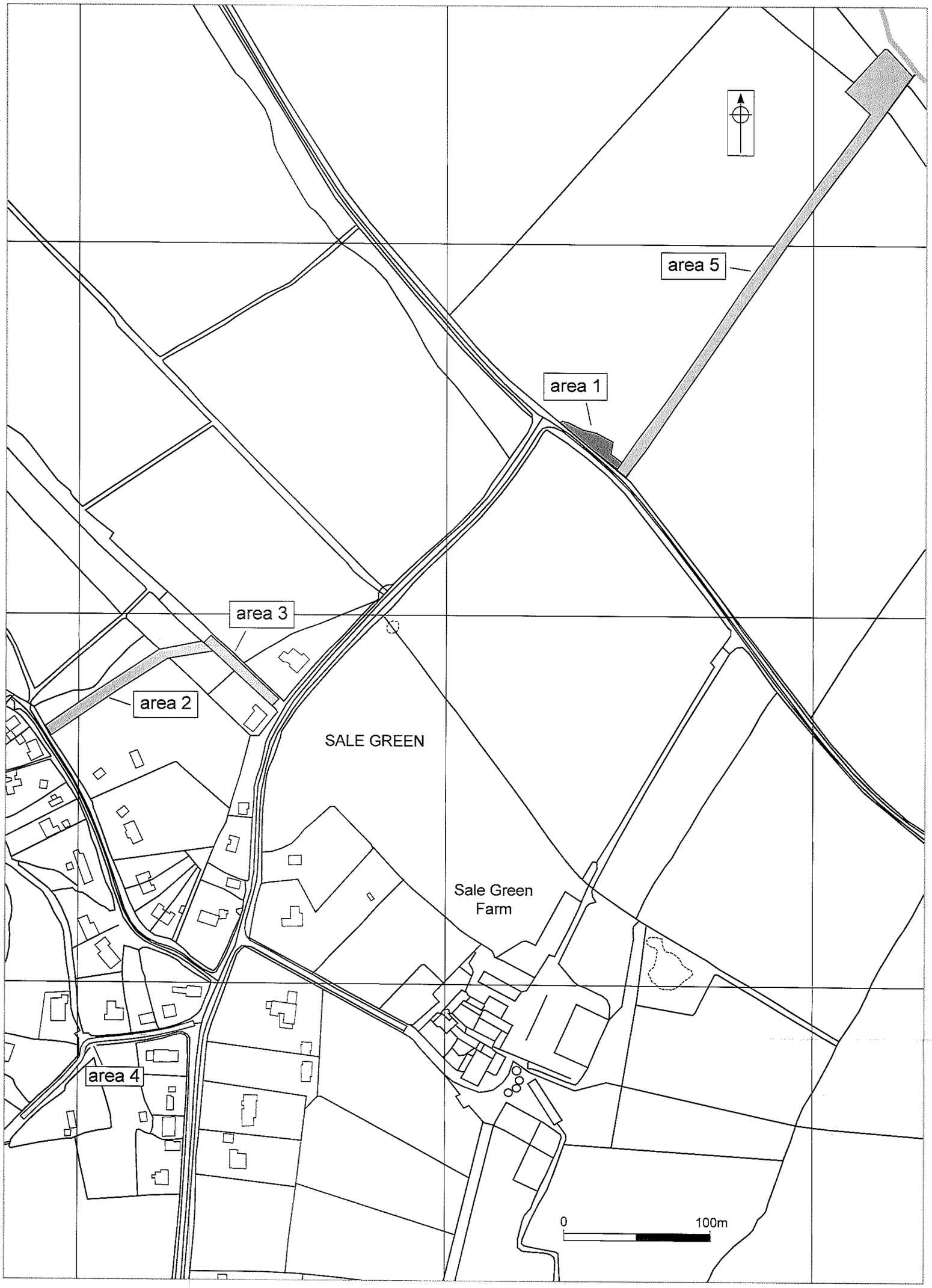
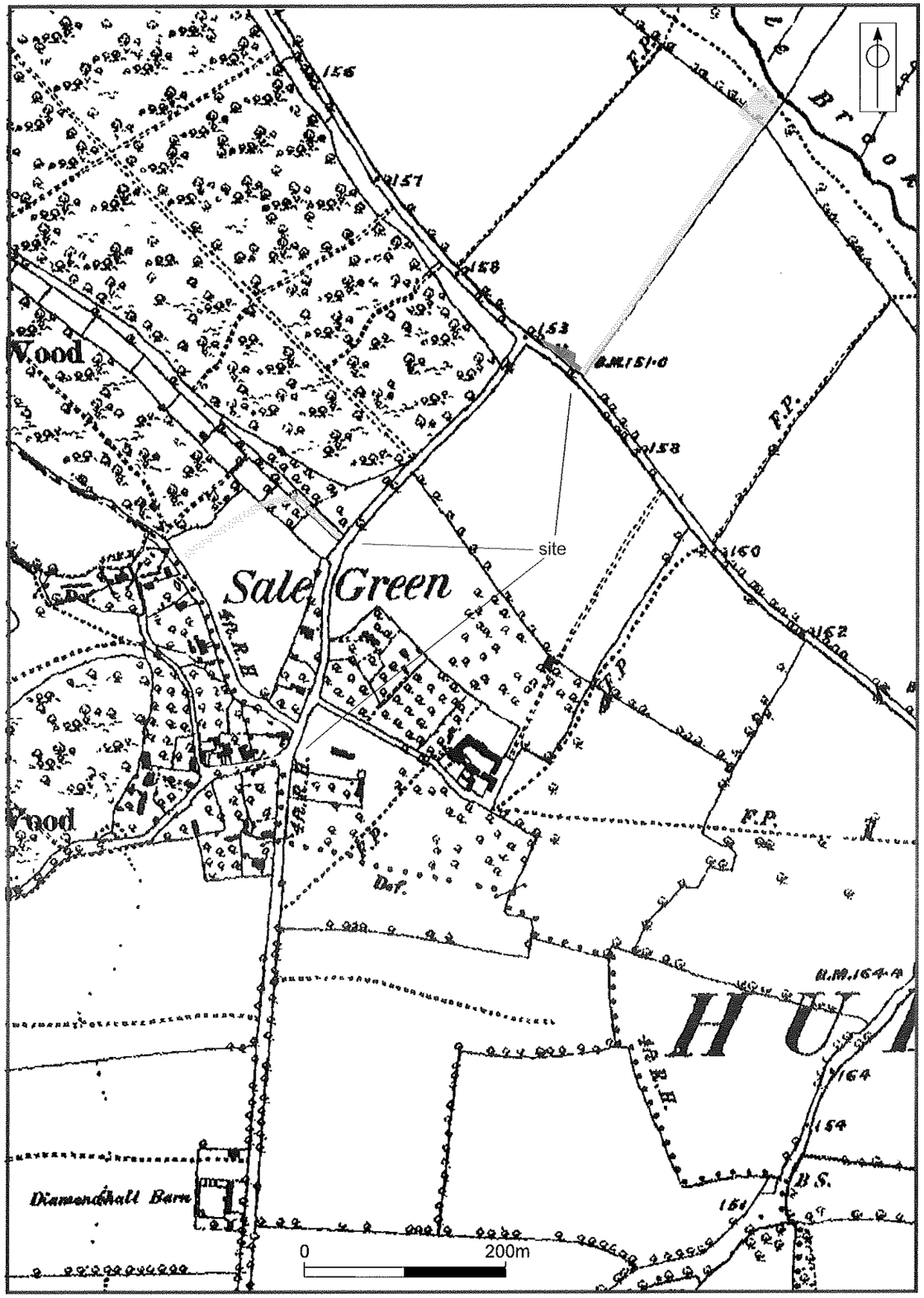


Figure 2: Location of trenches



Extract from First edition OS map 1885

Figure 3

Trench descriptions

Area 1

Maximum dimensions: Length: 52m Width: 22m Depth: 0.32m

Main deposit description

Context	Type Colour Texture	Description	Date	Interpretation	Depth below ground level
100	Friable dark brown silty loam	Frequent sub-angular stones, charcoal flecks and root disturbance	Modern	Topsoil	0-0.25m
101	Firm, compact mid-light brown silty clay	Occasional sub-angular stones and charcoal flecks, heavy plough disturbance	Modern	Subsoil	0.25m-0.37m
102	Firm, compact mid-light brown silty clay and mudstone	Occasional small sub-rounded pebbles		Natural	0.35m+

Deposit description

Area 2

Maximum dimensions: Length: 115m Width: 8m Depth: 2.00m (max)

Main deposit description

Context	Type Colour Texture	Description	Date	Interpretation	Depth below ground level
200	Friable dark brown silty loam	Frequent sub-angular stones, charcoal flecks and root disturbance	Modern	Topsoil	0-0.23m
201	Firm, compact mid-light brown silty clay	Occasional sub-angular stones and charcoal flecks, heavy plough disturbance	Modern	Subsoil	0.23-0.30m
202	Firm, compact mid-light brown silty clay and mudstone	Occasional small sub-rounded pebbles		Natural	0.30m+

Deposit description

Area 3

Maximum dimensions: Length: 60m Width: 0.65m Depth: 2.00m (max)

Main deposit description

Context	Type Colour Texture	Description	Date	Interpretation	Depth below ground level
300	Friable dark brown silty loam	Frequent sub-angular stones, charcoal flecks and root disturbance	Modern	Topsoil	0-0.23m
301	Firm, compact mid-light brown silty clay	Occasional sub-angular stones and charcoal flecks, heavy plough disturbance	Modern	Subsoil	0.23-0.32m
302	Firm, compact mid-light brown silty clay and mudstone	Occasional small sub-rounded pebbles		Natural	0.30m+

Deposit description

Area 4

Maximum dimensions: Length: 80m Width: 0.65m Depth: 2.00m (max)

Main deposit description

Context	Type Colour Texture	Description	Date	Interpretation	Depth below ground level
400	Modern rubble	Frequent brick, stone sand and clay	Modern	Present track	0-0.35m
401	Loose yellow silty sand	Occasional clay, small sub-rounded pebbles and brick and tile fragments	Modern	Earlier track make-up layer	0.35-0.50m
402	Firm, compact mid-light brown silty clay and mudstone	Occasional small sub-rounded pebbles		Natural	0.30m+
403	Loose yellow silty sand	Frequent small sub-angular gravels		Secondary fill of feature 405	0.40-0.79m
404	Loose reddish brown silty sand	Occasional small sub-angular gravels		Primary fill of feature 405	0.42-0.88m
405	Step sided, irregular, flat based cut	Filled by 403 and 404		Possible E/W linear or tree root disturbance	0.40-0.88m

Deposit description

Area 5

Maximum dimensions: Length: 320m Width: 5.80m Depth: 0.30m

Main deposit description

Context	Type Colour Texture	Description	Date	Interpretation	Depth below ground level
500	Friable dark brown silty loam	Frequent sub-angular stones, charcoal flecks and root disturbance	Modern	Topsoil	0-0.20m
501	Firm, compact mid-light brown silty clay	Occasional sub-angular stones and charcoal flecks, heavy plough disturbance	Modern	Subsoil	0.20-0.30m
502	Firm, compact mid-light brown silty clay and mudstone	Frequent limestone bedding with occasional small sub-rounded pebbles		Natural	0.30m+

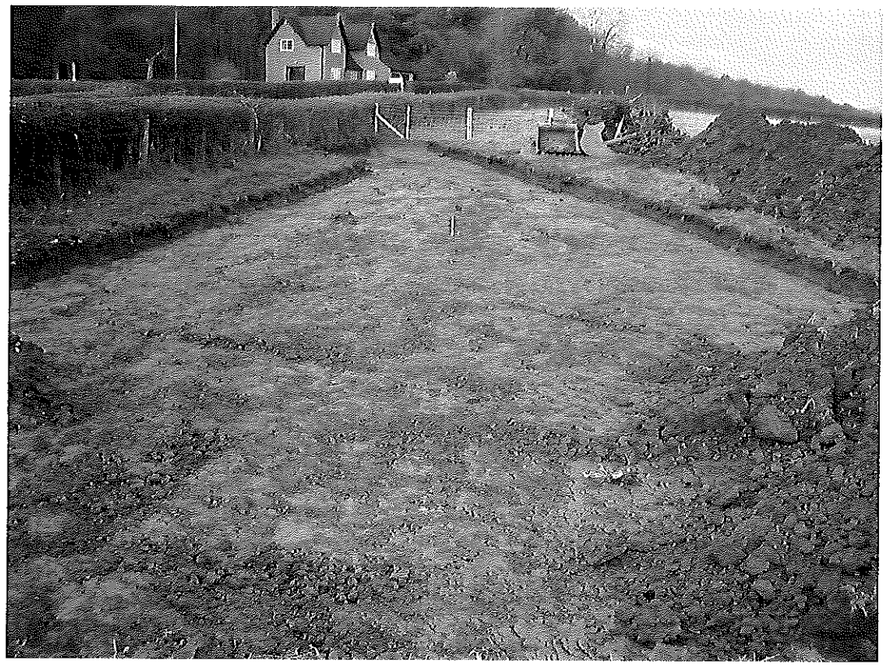


Plate 1: General view of Area 1, facing north-west

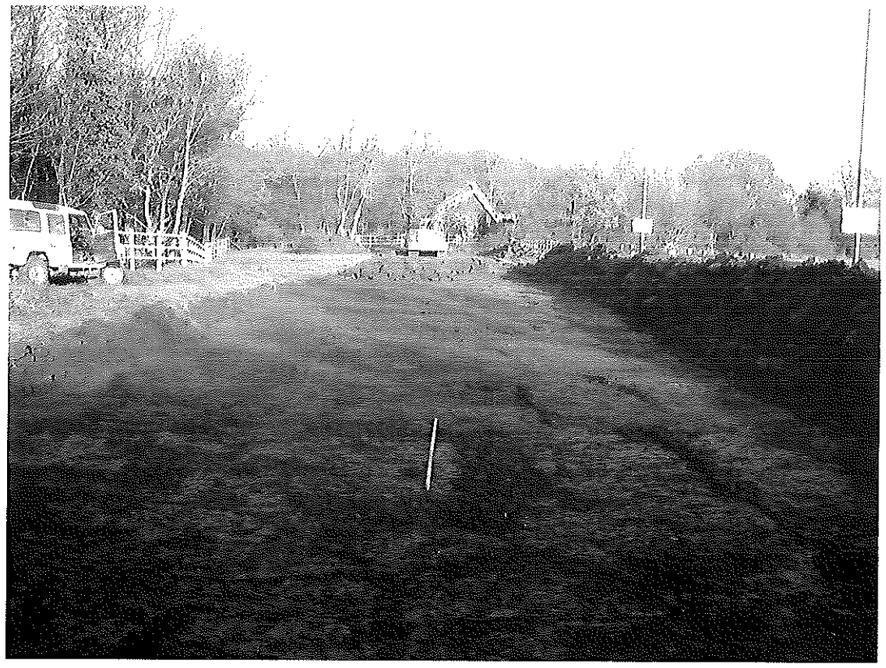


Plate 2: General view of Area 2, facing north-east

Plate 3: Excavation of service trench at southern end of Area 3, facing north-west

Plate 4: General view of service trench in Area 4, facing south-west

Plate 5: General view of Area 5, facing south-west