

# Old Hall Farm Bardon Hill Park Coalville Leicestershire



## Archaeological Watching Brief Report



**Oxford Archaeology**

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## Old Hall Farm, Bardon Hill Park, Coalville, Leicestershire

### *ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF REPORT*

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Front Cover Plate: View of Farm and Outbuildings during renovations from the north east.

## SUMMARY

*In November 2002 Oxford Archaeology (OA) carried out an archaeological watching brief at Old Hall Farm, Bardon Hill Park, Coalville, Leicestershire. The work was commissioned by Metz Architects and Masterplanners in advance of redevelopment of Old Hall Farm into office accommodation. The watching brief did not reveal any archaeological features pre-dating construction of the farm in 1852.*

### 1 INTRODUCTION

#### 1.1 Location and scope of work

- 1.1.1 In November 2002 Oxford Archaeology (OA) carried out an archaeological watching brief at Old Hall Farm, Bardon Hill Park, Coalville, Leicestershire (Fig. 1). The work was commissioned by Metz Architects and Masterplanners for Aggregate Industries UK Ltd in respect of a planning application for redevelopment of the Old Hall Farm into office accommodation.
- 1.1.2 A archaeological watching brief was requested by the North West Leicestershire District Council Planning Officer.
- 1.1.3 OA prepared a Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) detailing how it would meet the requirements of the brief (OA, 2002).

#### 1.2 Geology and topography

- 1.2.1 The application site lies within the boundary of a medieval Deer Park, the boundary of which survives in places as a reasonably well-preserved earthwork. Parts of the medieval park have subsequently been used as a quarry, though the farm buildings remain, as do a number of other groups of buildings in the general area.
- 1.2.2 The site of Old Hall Farm is due south of the extant quarry, to the southern corner of the former Deer Park. The site lies on Lacustrine alluvium over boulder clay at c. 191 m OD.

#### 1.3 Archaeological and historical background

- 1.3.1 The archaeological background to the watching brief was prepared for the WSI for the project (OA, 2002) and is reproduced below.
- 1.3.2 The background to the site was researched by Oxford Archaeological Unit (OAU, 1995, now Oxford Archaeology, OA) and prepared as a desk-top report for a previous client. Sites and Monuments Record (SMR) references were numbered and located on a map of the area and also included in a gazetteer. A summary of the research is presented below with the gazetteer reproduced at the end of this document (see also Figure 2, Features Map). The study identified 16 archaeological entries relevant to the site (OA Nos. 1 - 16, and other general area observations).

- 1.3.3 Prehistoric Finds (**OA 1**): Prehistoric finds are known from the summit of Bardon Hill, though their significance is unknown, and could suggest an area of archaeological potential.
- 1.3.4 The Medieval Park and Park Pale (**OA 2**): The 1st edition 1" OS map shows a substantial area of woodland labelled 'Bardon Old Park'. This area is now substantially occupied by the present quarry workings, but parts of the north, north-east and south-east sides of the wood remain.
- 1.3.5 Castle Hill Enclosure (**OA 3**): Castle Hill, east of Kellam's Farm may be an Iron Age site and has been depicted variously as 'moat' and 'earthwork' by the OS. It is a Scheduled Ancient Monument (No. 17067 'Moated Site East of Kellam's Farm'). The NAR entry is uncertain of the feature's date, and it may represent a post-medieval feature or indeed a large rabbit warren.
- 1.3.6 Medieval Ridge and Furrow (**OA 4 & 5**): A small area of medieval ridge and furrow is recorded north-east of Castle Hill Enclosure and another larger area lies on the north side of the park. Air photographs suggest that ridge and furrow may have been more extensive.
- 1.3.7 Old Hall Farm Moat (**OA 6**): The NAR records the moat at Old Hall Farm as stone-lined and holding water in 1972, and still in good condition in 1994. No associated features are recorded, though it is assumed to be the focus of the park and the manorial seat. It is possible that the remains of a medieval house may survive within the moat boundary with associated ancillary medieval farm buildings. There are no indicators for garden earthworks or ancillary enclosures.
- 1.3.8 Stream by Old Hall Farm (**OA 7**): The 1st Edition 1" OS map depicts a rectangular area of woodland? here where the stream divides. Marshy ground is indicated on OS maps upstream of this, though it appears to be in cultivation.
- 1.3.9 Linear Features, Rise Rocks Farm (**OA 8**): North and east of Rise Rocks Farm the SMR records a sinuous double linear subsoil feature, probably a boundary or track of unknown date: it may be a section of former park boundary.
- 1.3.10 Possible Historic Track/Road (**OA 9**): The footpath past Old Hall Farm and Kellam's Farm follows a boundary noted by Leicestershire Museum Service as a 'medieval bank and ditch'. It is possible (given the antiquity of both farms) that this is a medieval or post-medieval road, though it is not shown on the first edition 1" OS map and does not obviously link any historic villages.
- 1.3.11 Bardon Hall and Landscape Parkland (**OA 10**): The current Bardon Hall was built c. 1830, and is a Grade II Listed building. It is set within a relatively small area of landscaped parkland mainly to the south of the building. To the north-east it meets woodland. In the 1860s the woodland driveway from Copt Oak was created cutting across the 19th century rectilinear field pattern. Another straight driveway or track was cut through the woodland to the west from the lodge (which is also Grade II Listed), opposite Forest House on the present A50.

- 1.3.12 Old Brickyard (**OA 11**): The SMR also records the pond on the north-east boundary of the park, between Upper Greenhall Farm and Pettifors Farm, where there was a former brickyard.
- 1.3.13 Other noted entries are: Minerals Workings (**OA 12**); The NAR records the remains of a 19th or 20th century crushing plant and mineral railways within the area of the main quarry; Linear Cropmark (**OA 13**): A possible boundary or trackway is known north-east of Old Hall Farm from aerial photographs held at Swindon; Lodge to Bardon Hall (**OA 14**): Mid-19th century lodge, Grade II Listed; Probable site of medieval and post-medieval Bardon Manor House (**OA 15**); ?Historic Road (**OA 16**): Possible medieval bank and ditch.
- 1.3.14 Also of note is an area of former Parkland at Old Hall Farm (**Figure 1, Features Map**). Here a small linear area of parkland is shown by the 1st edition 1" OS map stretching along the valley east and west of the moated site (labelled 'Bardon Hall'). The boundaries of this area are still preserved, except for the northern and eastern boundaries to the east of the moated site. This appears to be a post-medieval remnant of parkland, presumably representing a minor landscape park associated with the Old Hall before New Hall was built and given its own piece of parkland. The Old Hall parkland is now pasture and arable fields, with little parkland character.
- 1.3.15 Kellam's Farm (**OA 17**) is a listed farmhouse with attached outbuildings. This dates to the mid 18<sup>th</sup> century with later alterations in the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century. It is shown on the OS 1<sup>st</sup> edition 1" map.
- 1.3.16 Shown on the 1st edition 1" maps are a number of farms not listed. These are Rise Rocks Farm and Old Rise Rocks, and the former Botts Hill Farm (shown on the plan of the landholding where the current 1:25,000 OS Pathfinder series map shows the extended quarry).

## 2 PROJECT AIMS AND METHODOLOGY

### 2.1 Aims

- 2.1.1 To identify and record the presence/absence, extent, condition, quality and date of archaeological remains in the areas affected by the development.
- 2.1.2 To make available the results of the archaeological investigation.

### 2.2 Methodology

- 2.2.1 Observations were made as redevelopment proceeded. The farm house and main barn were stripped for renovation. The remaining outbuildings were demolished for the construction of new office wing. The stream around the farm was straightened and new retaining walls constructed along its banks, with new overflow from the moat into the stream.



- 2.2.2 All features/deposits planned at a scale of 1:100 and where excavated their sections drawn at scales of 1:20. All excavated features were photographed using colour slide and black and white print film. A general photographic record of the work was made. Recording followed procedures detailed in the *OAU Fieldwork Manual* (ed D Wilkinson, 1992).

### 3 RESULTS

#### 3.1 Description of deposits

##### *Renovation of Farm buildings*

- 3.1.1 After the outbuildings were demolished to ground level, a test pit (trench 1) measuring 1 x 1.6 x 1.3 m was excavated to check the foundations of the rear north wall. This exposed the natural (1) at 0.6 m below the surface. It was overlain by a 0.16 m layer of very black silty clay (2), which was part of an earlier stream bed. This was sealed below a dark brown silty clay topsoil (3), which measured 0.4 m thick. This had been cut by a 0.75 m deep foundation trench (6) for the north wall (7) of the outbuilding. Covering this was a layer of disturbed topsoil (4) and demolition from the present work on the farm (Figs 3 & 4, Section 1).
- 3.1.2 Trench 2 measuring 4m x 1 m x 0.5 m was excavated along the line of the south wall of the new offices. This exposed the natural (1) sealed below a layer of dark brown silty clay topsoil (5) with remnants of old courtyard surfaces. This was sealed below 0.18 m thick concrete surface of the old yard (Fig. 3).

##### *Rerouting of Stream*

- 3.1.3 The re-routing of the stream exposed topsoil overlying the natural in section. It was noted that there was a large quantity of stone rubble along the banks of the stream. This could have been remains of a lining possibly to slow erosion along the stream bank (Fig. 3).

#### 3.2 Finds

- 3.2.1 No finds were recovered during the watching brief.

#### 3.3 Palaeo-environmental remains

- 3.3.1 No deposits suitable for environmental sampling were identified during the watching brief.

#### 4 DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

- 4.1.1 The watching brief did not reveal any archaeology pre-dating the construction of the farm in 1852. The site had been farm land in base of valley south of the moated site, with a stream running along the valley base and feeding the moat. The site had been levelled and Old Hall Farm buildings were built. Some of the outbuildings look as if they had been built with reused material and beams possibly from a nearby building although no sign of foundations or ground works for this were observed in the development area.

## APPENDICES

## APPENDIX 1 ARCHAEOLOGICAL CONTEXT INVENTORY

<i>Context</i>	<i>Type</i>	<i>Depth</i>	<i>Width</i>	<i>Height</i>	<i>Comments</i>	<i> Finds</i>
1	Natural				Natural	
2	Layer	0.16 m			Stream bed	None
3	Layer	0.40 m			Topsoil	None
4	Layer	0.42 m			Topsoil/Demolition	None
5	Layer	0.19 m			Topsoil/Courtyard	None
6	Cut	0.75 m	0.70 m		Foundation trench	
7	Wall	0.75 m	0.70 m		North wall of barn	

## APPENDIX 2 BIBLIOGRAPHY AND REFERENCES

OA, 1992, *Fieldwork Manual* (1st edition, ed. D Wilkinson)

OAU, 1995, *Bardon Hill Park Pale. Desk-Top Archaeological Assessment*. Client Report.

OA, 2002, *Old Hall Farm, Bardon Hill Park, Leicestershire* Written Scheme of Investigation

## APPENDIX 3 SUMMARY OF SITE DETAILS

**Site name:** Old Hall Farm, Bardon Hill Park, Leicestershire

**Site code:** BHOHF 02

**Grid reference:** NGR SK 461 122

**Type of watching brief:** Renovation of farm buildings for office accommodation and re-routing of stream.

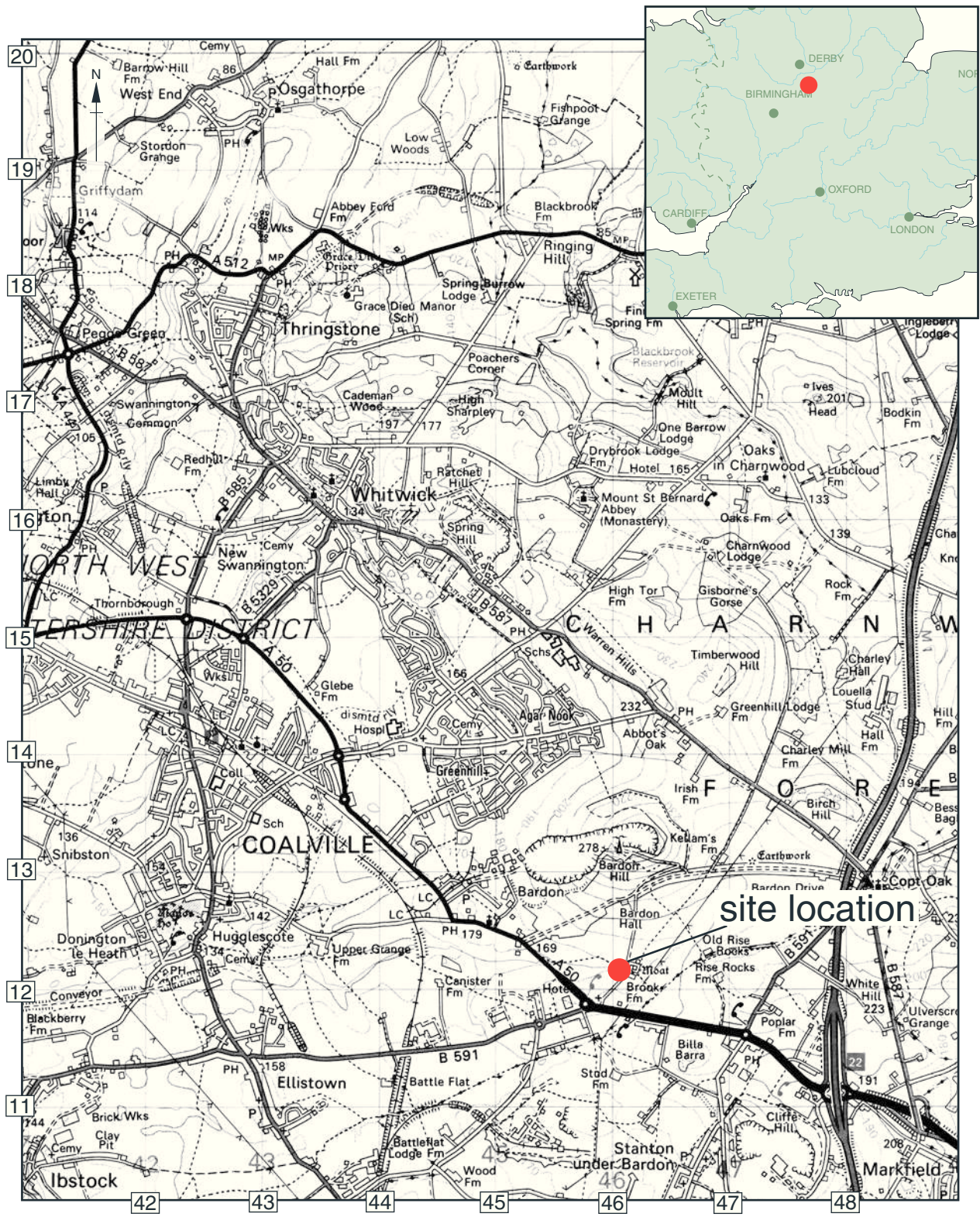
**Date and duration of project:** Four site visits from the 4/11/2002 to 26/11/2002.

**Area of site:** 27 m x 40 m

**Summary of results:** *The watching brief revealed no archaeological features pre dating construction of the farm in 1852.*

**Location of archive:** The archive is currently held at OA, Janus House, Osney Mead, Oxford, OX2 0ES, and will be deposited with Leicestershire County Council, Museums, Arts and Records Service, Suite 4, Bridge Park Plaza, Bridge Park Road, Thurmaston, Leicester, LE4 8BL in due course, under the following accession number: X.A86.2002

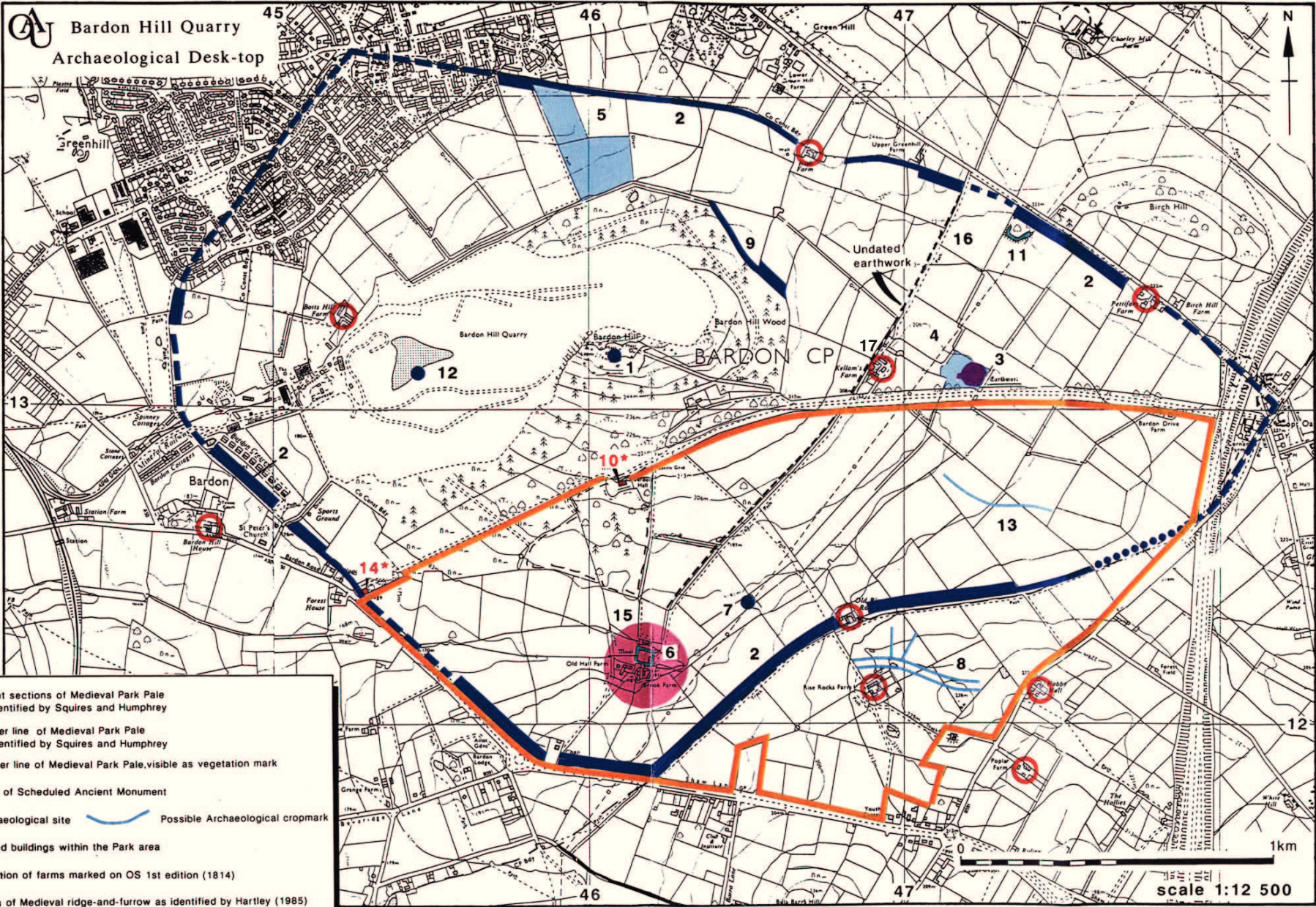




Scale 1:50,000

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Figure 1: Site location



- Extant sections of Medieval Park Pale as identified by Squires and Humphrey
- Former line of Medieval Park Pale as identified by Squires and Humphrey
- Former line of Medieval Park Pale, visible as vegetation mark
- Area of Scheduled Ancient Monument
- Archaeological site
- Possible Archaeological cropmark
- 14\* Listed buildings within the Park area
- Location of farms marked on OS 1st edition (1814)
- Area of Medieval ridge-and-furrow as identified by Hartley (1985)
- Extant water-filled feature
- Outline of possible quarry extension
- Probable site of Medieval and Post-Medieval Bardon Hall

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Figure 2: Location of Cultural Heritage features mentioned in text (reproduced from DBA, OAU 1995)

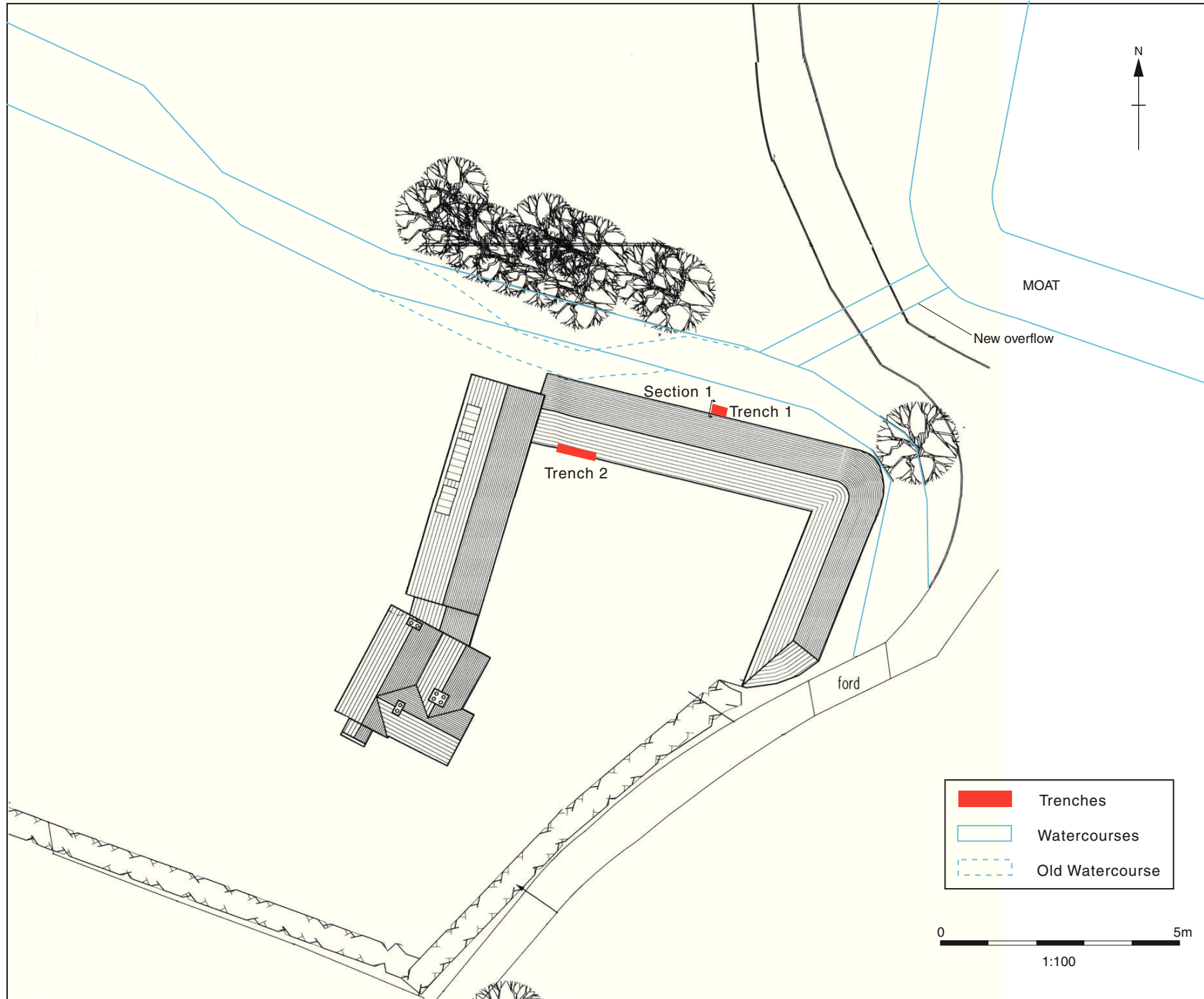


Figure 3: Plan of Farm Buildings with Trenches, Section and new route of stream

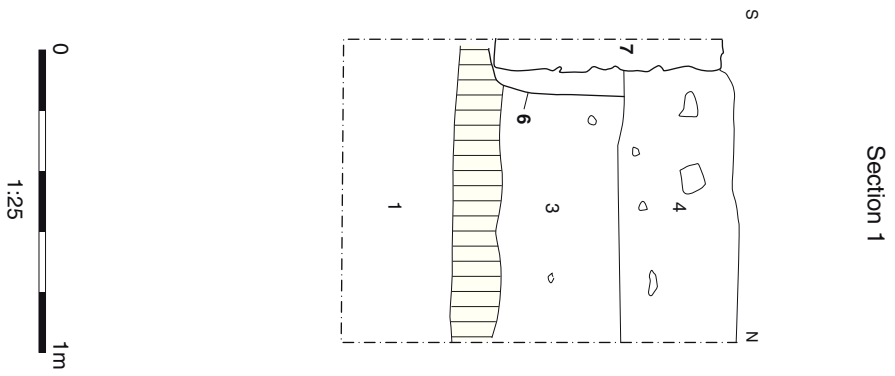


Figure 4: Section 1







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