

**TUDOR HALL SCHOOL**

**TUDOR HALL SCHOOL, WYKHAM PARK, BANBURY, OXFORDSHIRE**

*NGR SP 4400 3805*

**ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF REPORT**

**Oxford Archaeological Unit**

**July 2001**

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ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF REPORT

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Oxford Archaeological Unit

July 2001

## *Summary*

*In July 2001, Oxford Archaeological Unit (OAU) undertook a watching brief at Tudor Hall School, Wykham Park, Banbury (SP44003805). No archaeological remains were observed as the site had previously been landscaped to provide a level surface for the existing playing field.*

### **1. Introduction**

- 1.1 Planning permission has been granted by Cherwell District Council for the creation of an all-weather hockey pitch on an existing grass playing field at Tudor Hall School, Banbury. Due to the potential disturbance of below ground archaeological deposits, a condition for an archaeological watching brief has been attached to the permission in line with PPG16 and local plan policy.
- 1.2 The site lies at c116.5 m OD and the geology is fine loamy soils overlying iron stone. The development area is located within playing fields situated to the north and west of Tudor Hall School and south of Wykham Lane, Wykham Park, Banbury.

### **2 Background**

- 2.1 The proposed development is located in an area of significant archaeological potential. The site lies immediately to the south of the projected route of a Roman road - now defined by Wykham Lane - and adjacent to the remains of a probable Roman villa, which is believed to lie between the Manor House (now Tudor Hall School) and the road.
- 2.2 The proposal area is also located to the north of the 17th century manor house which stands on the site of an earlier manor, which Robert de Arden was given license from the King to crenellate in 1331. A settlement at "*Wickham*" was mentioned in the Domesday Survey of 1086 and the extant earthworks of the settlement had been present to the south west of the manor house until the onset of intensive deep ploughing.
- 2.3 The settlement of Wickham is thought to have been deserted sometime in the late 15th or early 16th century and it is therefore likely that the development may disturb significant archaeological deposits dating from the Roman period onward.

### **3 Aims**

- 3.1 The aims of the watching brief were to identify any archaeological remains exposed on site during the course of the works, and to record these to established OAU standards (Wilkinson 1992), in order to secure their preservation by record.

## **4 Methodology**

- 4.1 The watching brief was undertaken by means of separate inspection visits.
- 2.4 Within the constraints imposed by health and safety considerations the deposits exposed were cleaned, inspected and recorded in plan, section and by colour slide and monochrome print photography. Written records were also made on proforma sheets.

## **5 Results (Fig. 2)**

- 5.1 The groundwork for the new all-weather pitch involved the general reduction of topsoil across the site by an average of 0.20 m and the subsequent excavation of drainage channels within the area of the reduced dig.
- 5.2 During the watching brief it became apparent that the site had already been landscaped during construction of the existing playing field. The topography of the site is a general slope from north to south, with the ground also falling away sharply to the west. The existing pitch appears to have been constructed by cut and fill, with a significant incursion into the slope at the north of the site providing the make up material for the southern and western areas.
- 5.3 Consequently, any archaeological remains to the north of the site have been truncated during this process, whilst archaeology which may be present to the south and west has been obscured by made ground.

## **6 Finds**

- 6.1 A number of 20th Century pottery sherds were observed within the southern area of the site but were not retained.

## **7 Environmental results**

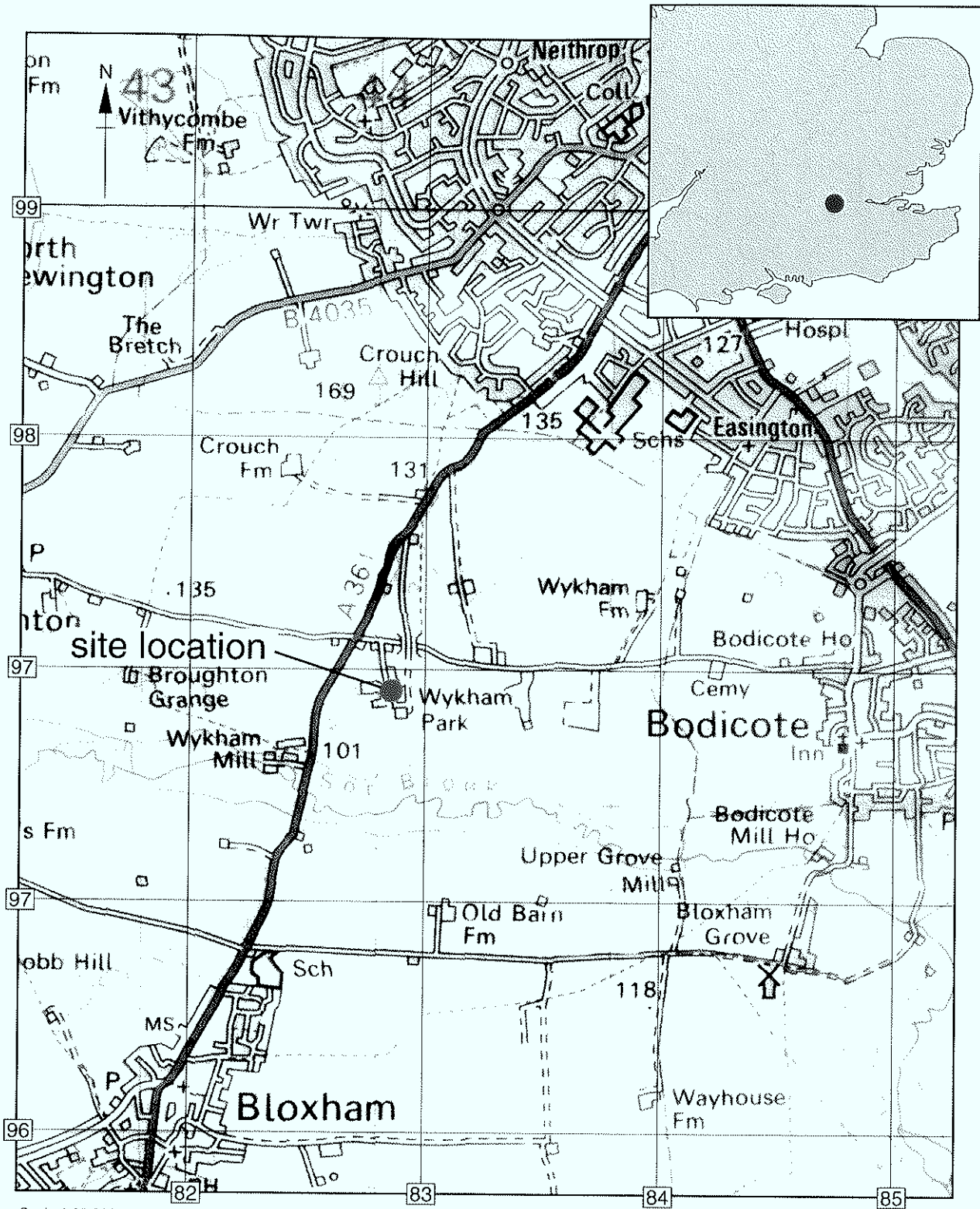
- 7.1 Although full consideration was given to various sampling strategies, due to the absence of any suitable deposits and the tight constraints of the excavation, no environmental soil samples were taken.

## **8 Discussion**

- 8.1 No archaeological deposits or features were observed during the watching brief due to the previous landscaping of the site.

## **References.**

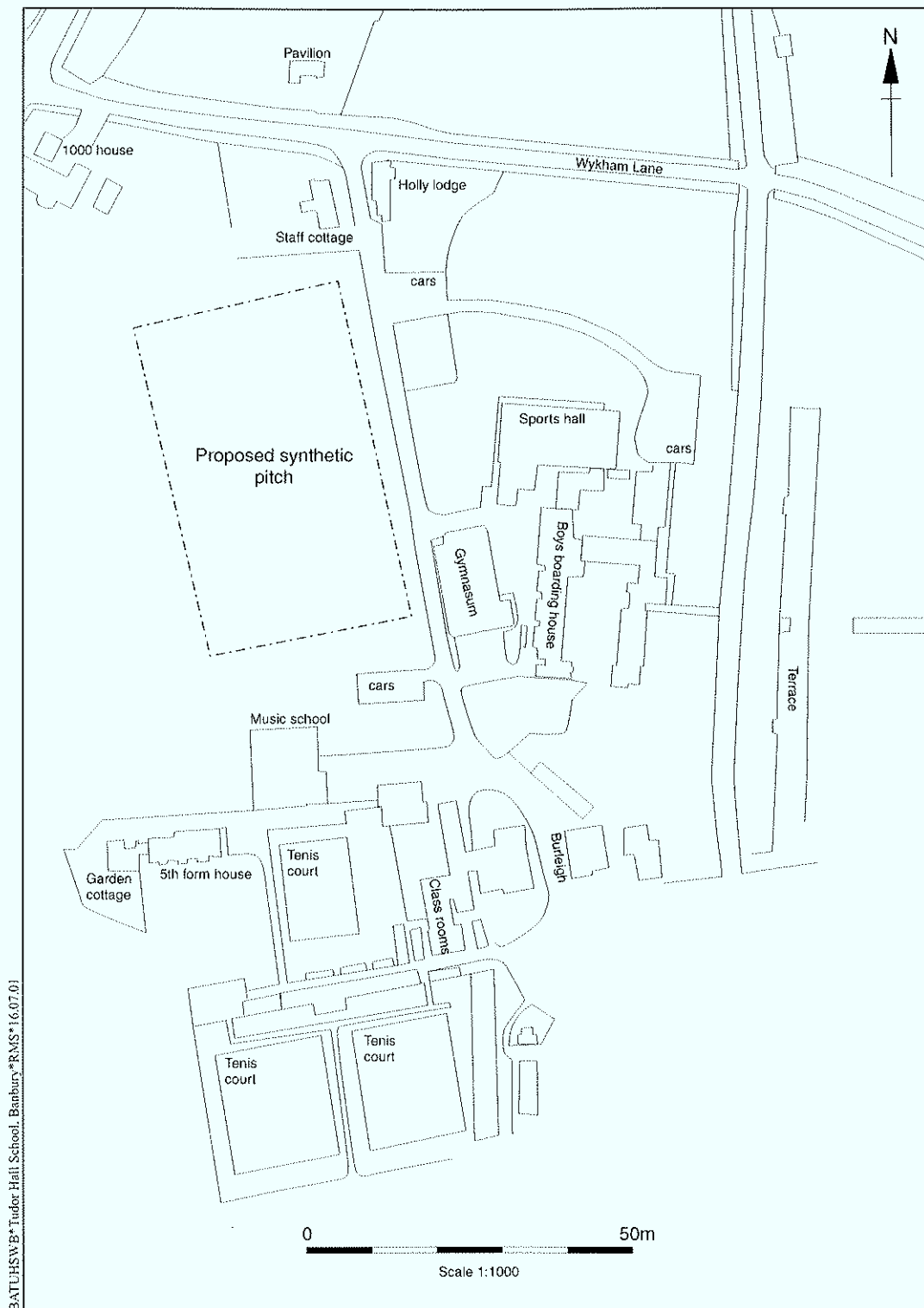
Wilkinson, D (ed) 1992 Oxford Archaeological Unit Field Manual, (First edition, August 1992).



Scale 1:25,000

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Figure 1: Site location.



BATUHSVB\*Tudor Hall School, Banbury, RMS\* 16.07.01

Figure 2 : Site plan.

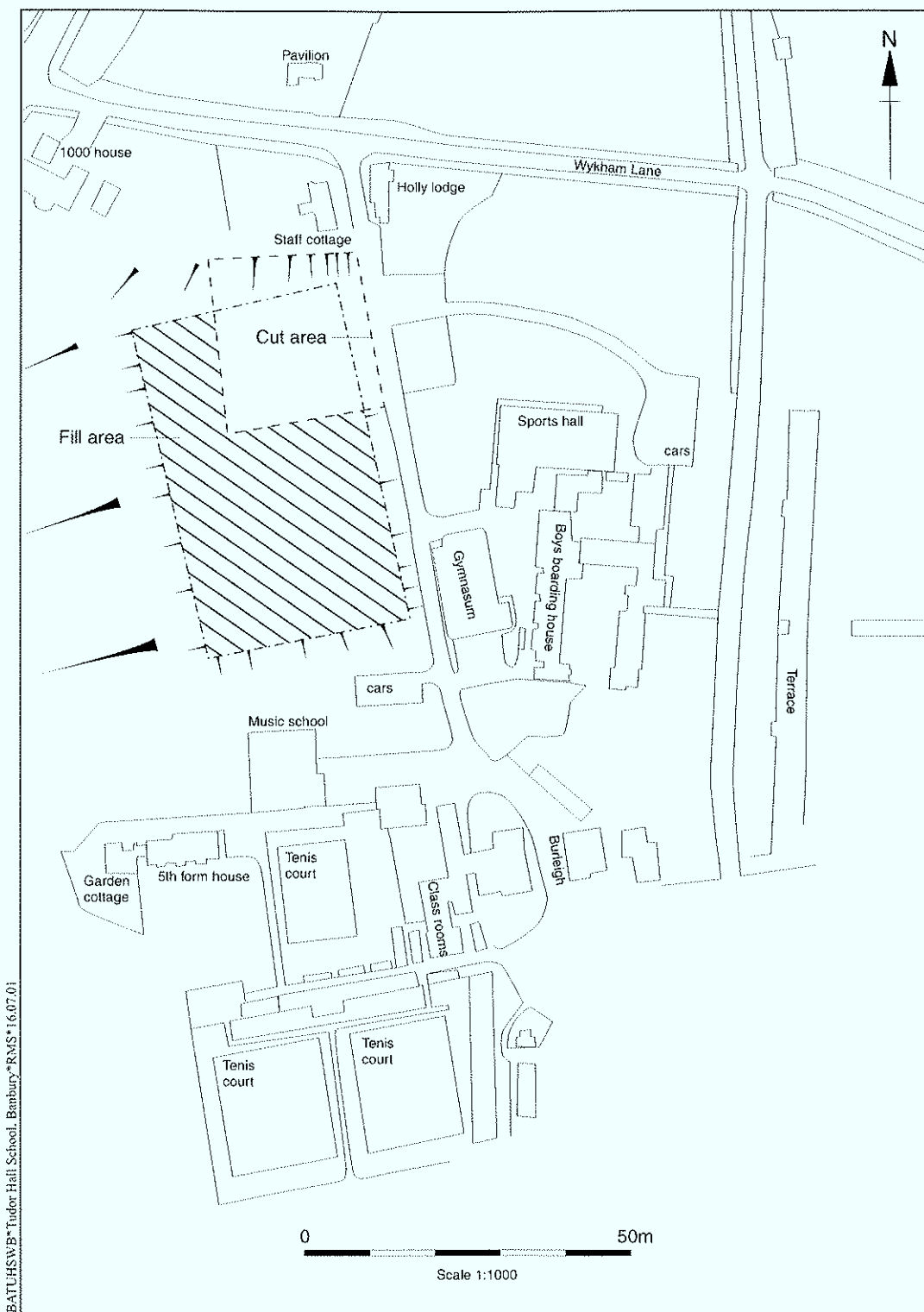


Figure 3 : Plan showing probable cut and fill areas from construction of existing playing field.



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