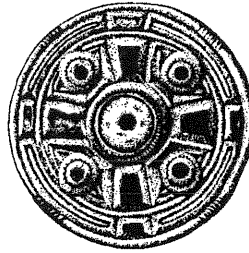


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Archaeological Field Unit

An Archaeological Desktop Assessment at Bow Brickhill, Milton Keynes, Buckinghamshire

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August 2003

Cambridgeshire County Council

Report No. ^A230

Commissioned by Kier Land

**An Archaeological Desktop Assessment at Bow Brickhill, Milton
Keynes, Buckinghamshire**

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2003

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SUMMARY

This study is designed to assess the archaeological potential of an area of 85.2 hectares of land to the north of Bow Brickhill (SP 903 350). Within the subject site is a possible soil mark visible on aerial photographs which has been tentatively recorded by Milton Keynes Sites and Monuments Record as an enclosure. A road ran through the western part of the subject site according to both the 1770 Jeffery's Map and the Pre-Enclosure Map of Bow Brickhill. In the latter map, the names of four fields to the south of this road imply that there had been a former croft(s) in at least one of the fields.

Aerial photographs from the 1940s show ridge and furrow surviving across the development area, implying that in the later medieval period it was within the field land of Bow Brickhill. The subject site has largely remained pasture land to this day. There are no other known archaeological sites or artefacts from the development area although archaeological sites and artefacts have been recorded adjacent to it. It is unknown if any of these sites run into the subject site. Apart from the faint soil mark, aerial photographs have revealed no other features within the subject site although this may be due to the masking any features by the natural clay.

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An Archaeological Desktop Assessment at Bow Brickhill, Milton Keynes, Buckinghamshire (SP 903 350)

1 INTRODUCTION

This desktop assessment was commissioned by Kier Land. In July 2003 the Archaeological Field Unit of Cambridgeshire County Council carried out an archaeological assessment of a site of approximately 85.2 hectares to the north of the settlement at Bow Brickhill, Milton Keynes (Fig. 1).

The aim of this assessment was to conduct a preliminary archaeological study to ensure that there have not been any significant findings in the vicinity. It is intended that a more detailed desktop study will be submitted at a later stage within representations to the deposit Milton Keynes Local Plan.

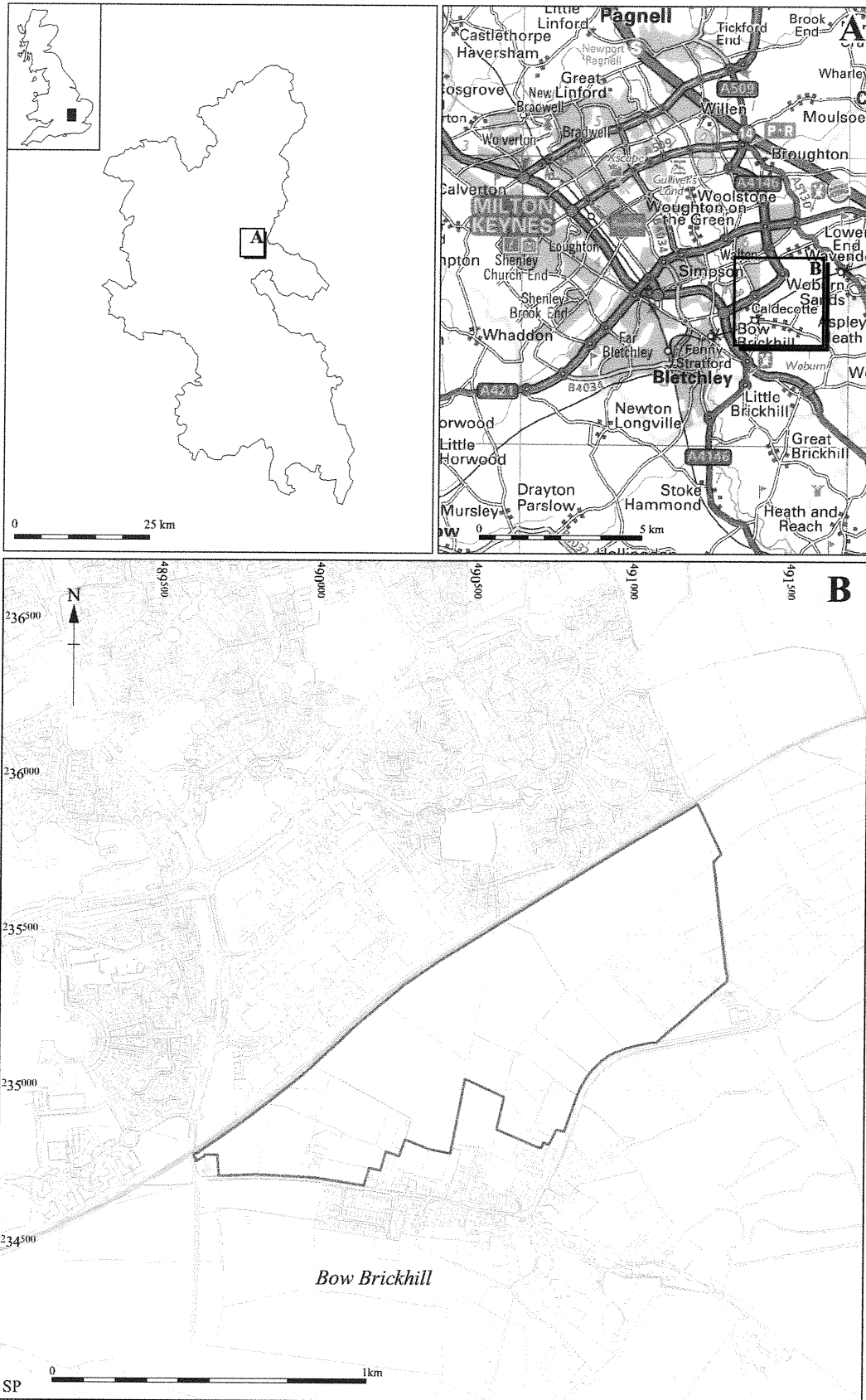
2 GEOLOGY AND TOPOGRAPHY

The underlying geology is clay intermixed with coarse sand. Two of the fields on the Pre-Enclosure Map are notably called West Clay Furlong and East Clay Furlong. The site is relatively flat from 86.3m OD at the far west of the site to 90.3m OD on the southern side and 85.3m OD on the eastern side. The site was visited and viewed from the road in July 2003 with over half of the fields within the subject site observed: all of the observed fields are presently being used as agricultural pasture with horses grazing within some of them.

Denuded ridge and furrow could be seen in several of the fields showing that little ploughing has taken place here since the later medieval period. Recent aerial photographs indicate that only a few fields within the subject site have been ploughed and used for arable agriculture.

3 SOURCES

The sources consulted during the production of this report were the Sites and Monuments Record at Milton Keynes, and the County Record Offices in Aylesbury (ARO) and Bedford (BRO). The SMR supplied a CD Rom of all archaeological records, aerial photographs, a ridge and furrow map and the location of roads on the 1770 Jeffery's Map. Some of the historic maps of Bow Brickhill are held at the Buckinghamshire Record Office in Aylesbury as well as historic secondary sources. The Bedfordshire Record Office holds other Bow Brickhill historic maps and documents. These maps and documents were donated by the landowners, the Russell family (Dukes of



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Figure 1 Location of Development Area.

Bedford), with some conditions including the requirement that none of the maps could be photographed without permission of the Russell family.

3.1 Sites and Monuments Record (Fig. 2)

There are two recorded archaeological sites within the subject site. The Sites and Monuments Record has plotted a possible soil mark from an aerial photograph, the mark having been recorded as a possible enclosure (SMR ID 4283; Fig. 2). The soil mark is very faint and may be natural in phenomenon as it does not appear on other aerial photographs. In addition, the SMR have plotted a road running through the site in 1770 from the Jeffery's Map of Buckinghamshire (Fig. 2). This road may be medieval or earlier in origin.

The aerial photographs held in the SMR date from 1946 and demonstrate that ridge and furrow survived relatively well at this time: it has, however, been denuded by infrequent ploughing over the last 60 years as is evident in more recent aerial photographs (Plate 1). The SMR have plotted the ridge and furrow in relation to the roads recorded in the 1770 Jeffery's Map (Fig. 2).

The SMR have recorded some activity around the subject site, especially to the north (see Table 1 below and Fig. 2). All of the SMR records within the subject site or within 300m of it are recorded below, with the exception of standing buildings within Bow Brickhill which are not relevant to this study. These records are biased towards fields to the north of the subject site, where some of the fields have been archaeologically fieldwalked. This has resulted in several prehistoric artefacts being recovered, a late Saxon strap fitting as well as medieval and post-medieval pottery. It is not known whether these are stray finds or imply settlement.

The artefacts/features from two spot finds in particular stand out as of possible importance. The mortar/limestone from No.2 about 100m to the north of the subject site may imply building materials from a former medieval structure. A Roman site No. 17 of unknown size with a recorded excavated ditch lies c.300m to the east of the subject site. 50/60 Roman pottery sherds were found during road widening sometime between 1965-7. This amount of pottery recovered implies the ditch is probably part of a settlement.

The SMR records the large Roman town of Magnentium (SMR ID 6033) c.1.3km to the south-west of the subject site. A road leads from Magnentium towards the subject site although its route is unknown (Brian Giggins, pers. comm.). The Iron Age hillfort of Danesborough (SMR ID 5235) is situated c.1.5km to south-east of the subject site.



Plate 1 Aerial photograph of the subject site in 1995

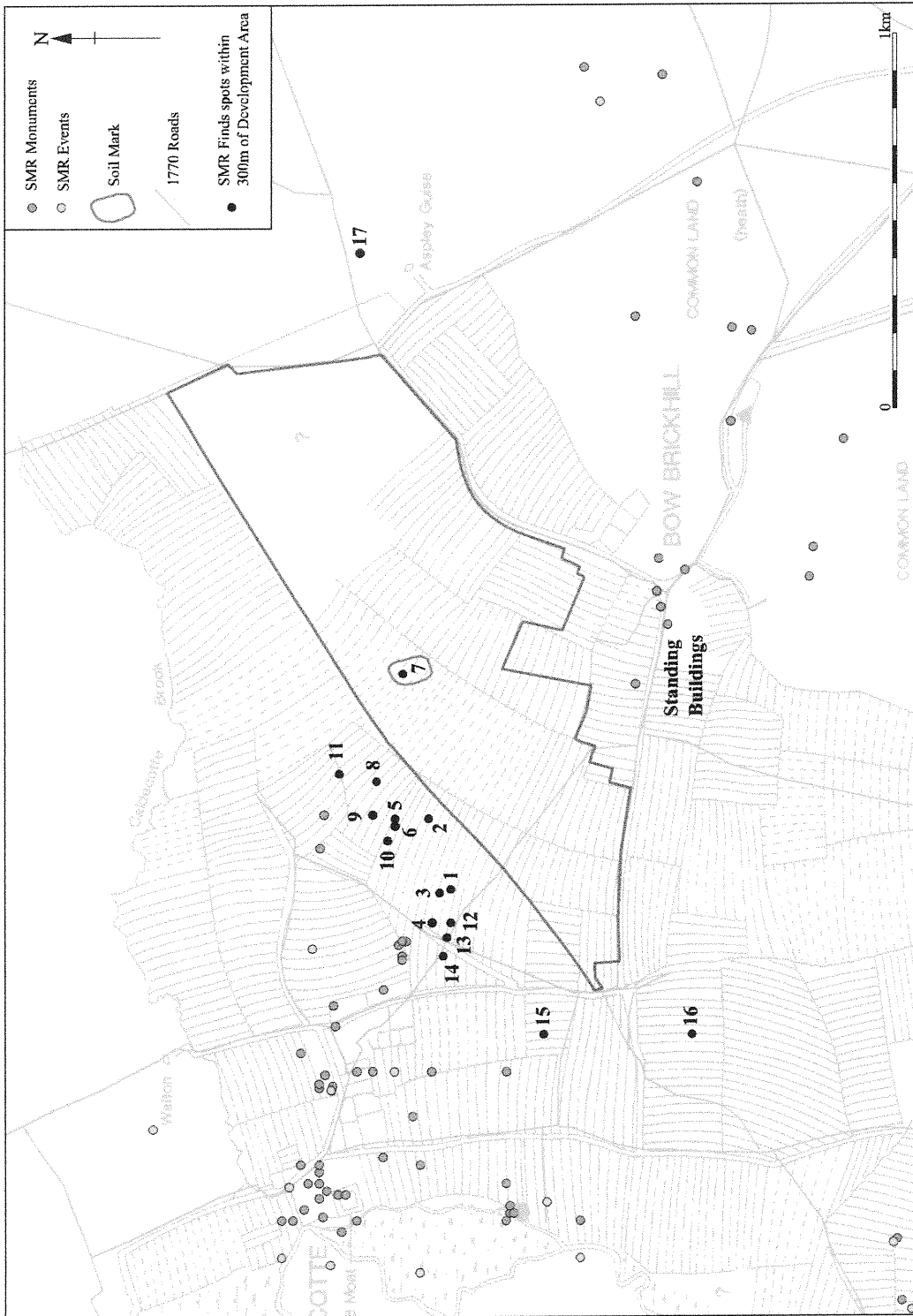


Figure 2 Possible soil mark of enclosure, location of roads in 1770, former ridge and furrow and Sites and Monuments Record sites in relation to the subject site.

No.	SMR ID No.	SMR Cas No.	Event	Object	Date
1	1732	318,800,000	Ploughed Field	Scraper	Neolithic/Bronze Age
2	3134	379,500,000	Ploughed Field	Mortar/limestone	Medieval
3	3661	396,700,000	Ploughed Field	Pottery Sherds	Post-medieval
4	2523	362,000,001	Ploughed Field	Pottery Sherds	Unknown
5	1733	313,900,000	Ploughed Field	Flint blade	Mesolithic/Bronze Age
6	1734	314,100,000	Ploughed Field	Flint Blade	Mesolithic
7	4283	546,500,000	Aerial Photograph	Enclosure?	?
8	1737	314,200,000	Ploughed Field	Lithic	Mesolithic/Bronze Age
9	1736	314,100,000	Ploughed Field	Microlith	Mesolithic
10	3665	397,100,000	Ploughed Field	Pottery	Post-medieval
11	3137	379,800,000	Ploughed Field	Pottery	Post-medieval
12	3666	397,200,000	Ploughed Field	Pottery	Post-medieval
13	3756	399,000,000	Ploughed Field	Pottery	Medieval/post-medieval
14	3664	397,000,000	Ploughed field	Pottery	Post-medieval
15	4723	606,800,000	Metal Detecting	Artefact	Post-medieval
16	4257	531,400,000	Metal Detecting	Artefact Strap fitting	Late Saxon
17	607	143, 200, 000	Excavation	Ditch	Roman

Table 1: SMR records in an area of up to 300m of the subject site

3.2 Cartographic Evidence (Figs 4-6)

The roads from the 1770 Jeffery's county map of Buckinghamshire have been recorded by the SMR (Fig. 2). The earliest local map is the Pre-Enclosure Map which shows that the subject site consisted entirely of fields (Fig. 3). These fields were owned by at least five landowners, as is apparent from the names marked on the map (Battams, Nathaniel Hilliard, William Page, Haseltine Esq. and The Rector). A minor backroad (also recorded in the 1770 Jeffery's Map) led from the western fringe of Bow Brickhill settlement from Green Way Road to Caldecot Road. Directly to the south of this backroad and to the north of Green Way Road the names of four fields recorded on the map (South Tinkens, Croft Close *etc.*) may imply that there was a former structure within these fields. No structures were recorded within the subject site and there are no other field names implying other former structure(s).

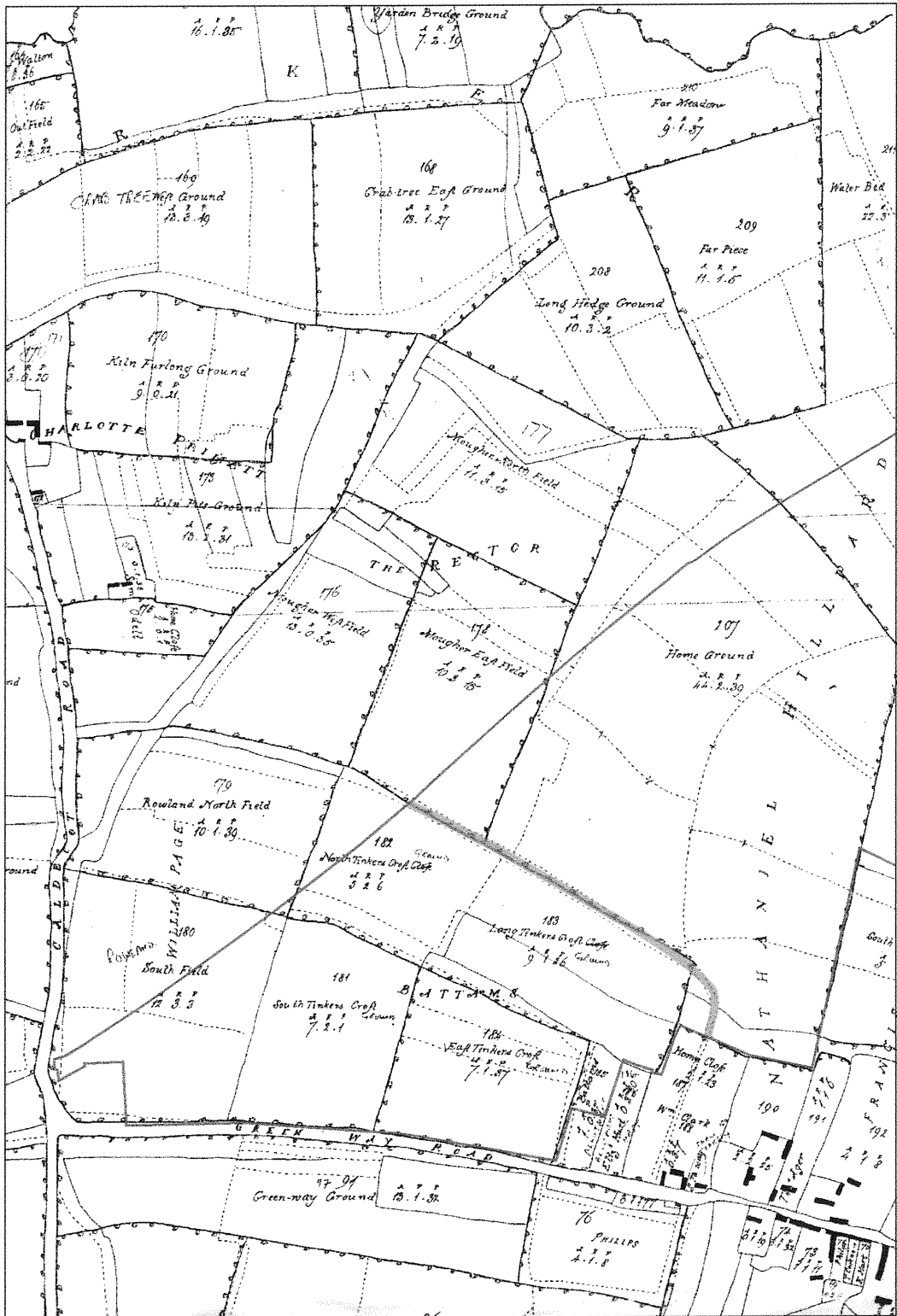


Figure 3 Pre-Enclosure plan.

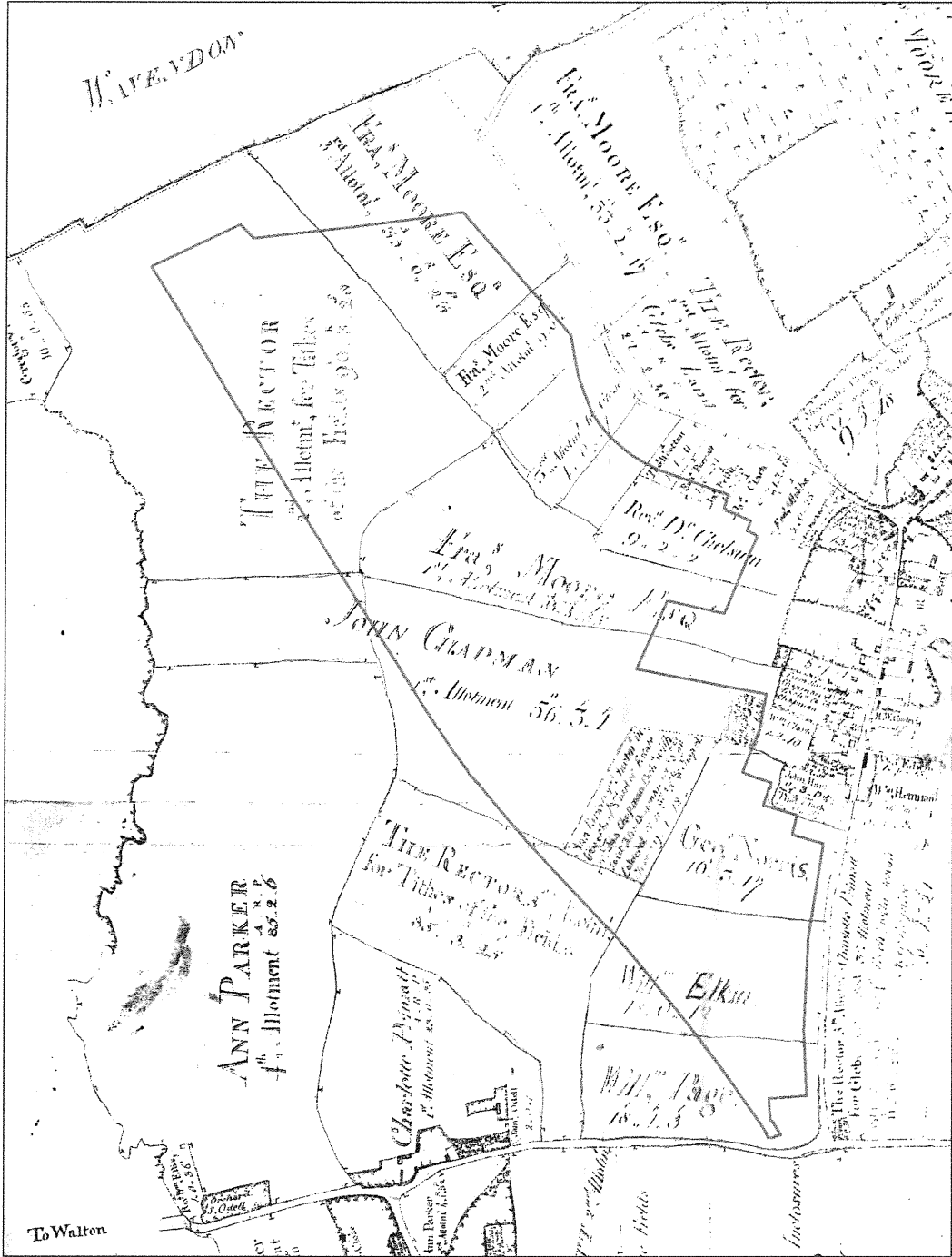


Figure 4 1791 Enclosure Map with study area outlined

The 1791 Enclosure Map indicates that the field boundaries in this part of the parish were not altered greatly by enclosure although the backroad through fields in the western part of the subject site had disappeared (Fig. 4). As with the Pre-Enclosure Map no properties were recorded within the subject site. The 1859 Estate map of Wavendon *etc.* only showed a few fields in the extreme eastern part of the subject site. These field boundaries had remained the same as those recorded on the 1791 enclosure plan. The 1st edition OS Map shows that the railway line (London and North-Western Railway), which marks the northern boundary to the subject site, had been built by this time. As with previous maps, no structures were evident within the subject site and the field boundaries remained largely unaltered. The 1926 OS Map shows little change in the study area, the only difference being that Tilbrook Farm buildings had been built directly to the west of the village. The present day map again indicates little alteration with the exception of recent development on the extreme eastern part of the site (Fig. 1).

3.3 Documentary Records

The Domesday Book (1086) records that Brickell was part of Newport Hundred. This probably comes from the British *brik* which means top or summit (Maver and Stenton 1925). In 1086 there were two manors in this parish both belonging to Walter Giffard and containing 5 and 4 hides respectively.

These areas in Edward the Confessor's time (1066) were divided into several ownerships. The former 5 hides were divided into four ownerships; 2 hides were owned by Goduin, a man of Wulfwig, Bishop of Lincoln and 3 hides by Godbold, Alric and Ordic (one hide each). In the 4 hide area, 2 hides were owned by Goduin and the other 2 hides by 5 thegns.

Under Giffard the manors were known as the honour of Gloucester. The land descended through the Earls of Gloucester and Hertford, then later to the Earls of Stafford, Dukes of Buckingham and thence to the crown. In 1530 the land became the honour of Gloucester and it continued to be held by knight services until the abolition of feudal tenure in the 17th century.

In 1847 Lipscomb records that there were 1530 acres in Bow Brickhill, half of which were arable and 250 acres were heath or common. In 1905 it was recorded that there were 1,848 acres, of which only 301 acres were arable land, 916 were permanent grass and 288 were woods and plantations (VCH 1969, 289). The Russell family (The Duke of Bedford) brought at least some of the land in the 19th century with the fields in the extreme south formerly being owned by James Haseltine (Pre-Enclosure Map) and later by Fra Moore (1791 Map). This area was part of the Russell lands in their 1859 Estate Map. The Russell family have donated their maps and archives, including deeds and indentures. A brief scan of these records suggests that some of these post-medieval records concern land within the subject site: *e.g.* indenture of land between James Haseltine and Fra Moore (BRO R boxes 257/8 IV, 175 2/63-76).

4 DISCUSSION

There is little definite evidence for the presence of archaeological remains within the subject site. The possible soil mark may denote an enclosure which could be a farmstead supplying food to either Danesborough Iron Age hillfort or the Roman town of Magnentium. A Roman road is known to lead away from the Roman town towards the site although its exact course is unknown.

The remains of denuded ridge and furrow within the subject site show that the area was used as field land in the medieval period. The site lies outside the main settlement though a road, possibly of medieval origin is recorded in the post-medieval maps (1770 Jeffery's Map and the Pre-Enclosure Map), through the western part of the subject site. Field names to the south of this road imply there may have been a former croft(s) in these fields.

The subject site has generally been used for pastoral agriculture in recent years which may explain the lack of recorded archaeological artefacts from it. Archaeological fieldwalking within fields further north has recorded prehistoric, medieval and post-medieval artefacts. There is a possible Roman site of unknown size c.300m to the east of the site. There is a possible medieval structure c.100m to the north of the subject site. The lack of cropmarks in the aerial photographs of the subject site (apart from a possible soil mark) may result from the masking of features by the natural clay.

5 ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The author would like to thank Kier Land who commissioned and funded the archaeological work. The project was managed by Judith Roberts. Thanks go to Brian Giggins who gave helpful advice, to both the Bedfordshire (BRO) and Buckinghamshire Record Office (ARO) and to Crane Begg who drew the illustrations.

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(BRO R1/291)

Enclosure Map and Award 1791 (ARO IR/27 R)

Estate map of Wavendon *etc.* 1859 (BRO HN 1/36)

1901 6" OS Map 1st Edition

1926 6" OS Map



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