



February 2001

**STORRS HALL,
ARKHOLME
LANCASHIRE**

Watching Brief Report

Storrs Hall
Arkholme
Lancashire

Archaeological Watching Brief

Report no 2000-2001/053/AUA8098

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CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS.....	2
SUMMARY	3
1. INTRODUCTION	4
1.1 Contract Background	4
1.2 Historical Background	4
1.3 Site Description.....	4
2. METHODOLOGY	5
2.1 Watching Brief.....	5
2.2 Archive.....	5
3. RESULTS	6
3.1 Watching Brief.....	6
4. CONCLUSIONS	7
4.1 Impact.....	7
5. BIBLIOGRAPHY	8
APPENDIX 1.....	9
Project Design	
ILLUSTRATIONS	13
Fig 1 Site Location Map	
Fig 2 Trench Location Plan	
PLATES.....	14
Plate 1 General View of Pool Area	
Plate 2 Area immediately West of the Hall	
Plate 3 Storrs Hall	
Plate 4 Section to the West of the Swimming Pool	
Plate 5 Section to the South of the Swimming Pool	

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Lancaster University Archaeological Unit wishes to thank Peter Hitchen for his assistance in the setting up of the project and to Mr Cooper for his assistance during the fieldwork. Thanks are also due to Peter McCrone of Lancashire County Archaeological Service for his assistance in the setting up of the project.

The fieldwork and report writing was undertaken by Andrea Scott. The report was edited by Rachel Newman and Jamie Quartermaine. The project was managed by Jamie Quartermaine.

SUMMARY

Lancaster University Archaeological Unit was commissioned to undertake an archaeological watching brief during the construction of an enclosure to an existing swimming pool to the west of Storrs Hall, Arkholme, Lancashire (SD 5772 7138). The work was undertaken in January 2001 in accordance with a project brief by the Lancashire County Archaeological Service (LCAS). The proposed ground works extended close to the historically important hall and the watching brief was intended to test for the possibility of earlier structures on the site. The project was designed to record any archaeological features encountered during the excavation of foundation trenches for the construction of the new enclosure.

The site comprised a rectangular area c16m (north/south) x 12m (east/west) around the existing swimming pool. Around this a trench was excavated, averaging 0.65m wide, with a maximum depth of 1.21m to the immediate west of the house. The excavation revealed underlying sandy clay subsoil, above natural boulder clay subsoil, and these deposits had all been subject to disturbance due to the previous excavation of the site for the installation of the swimming pool and associated drainage channels. No archaeological features were identified in any part of the site.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 CONTRACT BACKGROUND

- 1.1.1 A watching brief was undertaken by Lancaster University Archaeological Unit (LUAU) during January 2001 during ground works for the construction of an enclosure around an existing swimming pool located to the immediate west of Storrs Hall, Arkholme, Lancashire (SD 5772 7138; Fig 1).
- 1.1.2 The work was carried out in accordance with a brief compiled by Lancashire County Archaeological Service (LCAS). The methodology provided for an appropriate level of archaeological observation, and recording of all archaeological features or deposits encountered during the ground works. The proposed archaeological work was intended to provide a mitigative record of features exposed in the course of the intrusive groundworks that were undertaken in the course of the construction of a swimming pool enclosure.

1.2 HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

- 1.2.1 Storrs Hall is a grade II listed Tudor gothic mansion dating from 1848 (Plate 3), and was built on the site of an earlier hall, that was known to be in existence in 1698, but was itself rebuilt in 1702 (Robinson 1991, 243). The house has a symmetrical gabled front with an imitation pele tower and turret at the rear (Pevsner 1969).

1.3 SITE DESCRIPTION

- 1.3.1 The site was situated within the grounds of Storrs Hall between Arkholme and Over Kellet. The development site consisted of narrow trench extending from the western side of the Hall around the footprint of the existing swimming pool (Fig 2).

2. METHODOLOGY

2.1 WATCHING BRIEF

- 2.1.1 A watching brief was undertaken in order to record any deposits and features exposed during the groundworks for the extension. This was undertaken in accordance with a brief compiled by LCAS. The watching brief examined narrow trenching (0.65m wide) extending around a 16m x 12.5m area and this was mechanically excavated using a toothless bucket. In addition a programme of field observation was deemed necessary in order to record the location, extent, and character of any surviving archaeological features exposed during the excavation of trial pits in order to confirm the existing foundations for the hall. Where appropriate the nature of exposed deposits and their relationships to other deposits were clarified by manual cleaning.
- 2.1.2 On-site assessment of the deposits suggested that it was not necessary to take environmental samples.
- 2.1.3 The stratigraphy and archaeological features were recorded using methods recommended by English Heritage's Centre for Archaeology (CfA). Recording was in the form of context sheets and photographs (black and white prints, colour slide and digital) were taken as necessary.

2.2 ARCHIVE

- 2.2.1 A full archive of the results of all archaeological work carried out during fieldwork will form the basis for an archive to professional standards, in accordance with current English Heritage guidelines (*Management of Archaeological Projects*, 2nd edition, 1991). The archive will be deposited with the Lancashire County Record Office in Preston.

3. RESULTS

3.1 WATCHING BRIEF

- 3.1.1 Prior to excavation the site formed a secluded lawned area situated between the Hall and nearby tennis courts (Fig 2). The area excavated comprised a 2m wide trench extending approximately 16m by 12.5m around the existing swimming pool. A further off-shoot trench linked the swimming pool area with the hall. The western side of the area was taken down to a depth of 0.63m and the eastern side was excavated to a depth of 1.21m near the house in order to level the ground either side of a small garden wall (Plate 2).
- 3.1.2 The trench revealed considerable disturbance to the stratigraphy mainly at the eastern extent of the trench, which was attributable to the earlier groundworks for the construction of the swimming pool and associated drainage channels. Intact stratigraphic deposits were noted mainly at the western end of the trench and, where they survived, they were very uniform. The topsoil consisted of a 0.2-0.3m deep layer of garden soil and below this was a 0.15-0.25m thick layer of medium yellow brown clay sand subsoil (Plate 4). The underlying natural subsoil was made up of orange sandy clay, incorporating occasional sub-rounded stones and boulders; the upper level of the natural subsoil was c0.6m below the surface.
- 3.1.3 The disturbed area, immediately adjacent to the pool itself, comprised deposits of pinkish hardcore and stone flags truncating the subsoil (Plate 5). The area immediately to the east of the small (now demolished) garden wall, and adjacent to the Hall itself, comprised 0.69m of grey shale hardcore above the original sub-soil in order to build up the ground in this area. Although the trench extended right up to the hall, there was no evidence of any earlier foundations or remains predating those of the present structure.
- 3.1.4 No features or artefacts of archaeological significance were identified within the trenching that extended around the pool area and up to the western face of Storrs Hall.

4. CONCLUSIONS

4.1 IMPACT

- 4.1.1 Despite the location of the site, close to Storrs Hall, there were no archaeological features of significance identified during the watching brief. The natural stratigraphy present within the excavated area had been subject to immense truncation and disturbance as a result of the previous work in this area for the construction of the swimming pool. There was no evidence of any archaeological activity within this trench which may relate to earlier phases of Storrs Hall.
- 4.1.2 No significant archaeological resource was identified within the trench, but this does not preclude the possibility that features beyond the limits of the development site, within the gardens, where the ground is undisturbed.

5. BIBLIOGRAPHY

English Heritage, 1991 *Management of Archaeological Projects*, 2nd edn, London

Pevsner, N, 1969 *The Buildings of England: North Lancashire*, London

Robinson, JM, 1991 *A guide to the country houses of the North West*, London

APPENDIX 1 PROJECT DESIGN

University
Lancaster
Archaeological
Unit

November 2000

**STORRS HALL
ARKHOLME,

LANCASHIRE**

**ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF
PROJECT DESIGN**

Proposals

The following project design is offered in response to a request by Peter Hitchen for an archaeological watching brief at Storrs Hall, Lancashire.

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This project design is offered in response to a request by Peter Hitchen for an archaeological watching brief during the construction of an enclosure to a swimming pool at Storrs Hall, Arkholme, Lancashire (SD 5772 7138). The proposal is submitted in accordance with a brief by Lancashire County Archaeological Service (LCAS). This project design will define a programme of archaeological works to investigate the archaeological resource to be affected and will mitigate the development.

1.2 ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

- 1.2.1 Storrs Hall is a grade II listed building dating from 1848, and was built on the site of an earlier hall, that was known to be in existence in 1698, but was itself rebuilt in 1702. There is the potential for the sub-surface survival of the earlier structure and consequently a condition has been made by LCAS for an archaeological watching brief during any ground works.

1.3 LANCASTER UNIVERSITY ARCHAEOLOGICAL UNIT (LUAU)

- 1.3.1 LUAU has considerable experience of the archaeological evaluation of sites and monuments of all periods, having undertaken a great number of small and large projects during the past 18 years. Evaluations and watching briefs have taken place within the planning process, to fulfil the requirements of clients and planning authorities, to very rigorous timetables.
- 1.3.2 LUAU has the professional expertise and resources to undertake the project detailed below to a high level of quality and efficiency. LUAU and all its members of staff operate subject to the Institute of Field Archaeologists (IFA) Code of Conduct and LUAU is an IFA registered organisation (no 27).

2. OBJECTIVES

- 2.1 The proposed archaeological work is intended to provide a mitigative record of features exposed in the course of the intrusive groundworks that will be undertaken in the course of the construction of a swimming pool enclosure. The following programme has been designed in accordance with the project brief by the Lancashire County Archaeological Service (LCAS). The required stages to achieve the project objectives are as follows:

2.2 WATCHING BRIEF

- 2.2.1 An archaeological watching brief will be maintained during all excavation ground works to the site in the course of the proposed construction of the enclosure. This will record the above ground and sub-surface elements identified in the course of the programme.

2.3 REPORT

- 2.3.1 A written report will assess the significance of the data generated by this programme within a local and regional context.

3. METHOD STATEMENT

3.1 WATCHING BRIEF

- 3.1.1 **Access:** liaison for basic site access will be undertaken through Peter Hitchen.
- 3.1.2 **Methodology:** a permanent programme of field observation will accurately record the location, extent, and character of any surviving archaeological features exposed during the excavation of trial pits which are intended to confirm the existing foundations for the hall. A similar programme will be applied during the course of all ground works for the construction of the enclosure. The excavation works for both elements will be undertaken by a contractor of Peter Hitchen under the supervision of LUAU. This work will comprise the observation of the process of excavation for these works, the systematic examination of any subsoil horizons and masonry fabric exposed during the course of works, and the accurate recording of all archaeological features and horizons, and any artefacts, identified during observation.

- 3.1.3 During this phase of work, recording will comprise a full description and preliminary classification of features or materials revealed, and their accurate location (either on plan and/or section, and as grid co-ordinates where appropriate). All archaeological information collected in the course of fieldwork will be recorded in standardised form, and will include accurate national grid references. Features will be planned accurately at appropriate scales and superimposed on the large scale plan provided by the client. A photographic record will be undertaken simultaneously. The recording techniques and procedures employed by LUAU for such detailed recording represent current best practice.
- 3.1.4 It is assumed that LUAU will have the authority to stop works for up to one hour to enable the recording of important deposits, and to call in additional archaeological support if a find of exceptional importance is identified. This would only be called into effect in agreement with the client and LCAS. In normal circumstances, field recording will also include a continual process of analysis, evaluation, and interpretation of the data, in order to establish the necessity for any further more detailed recording that may prove essential.
- 3.1.5 **Health and Safety:** full regard will, of course, be given to all constraints (services etc), as well as to all Health and Safety regulations. LUAU provides a Health and Safety Statement for all projects and maintains a Unit Safety policy. All site procedures are in accordance with the guidance set out in the Health and Safety Manual compiled by the Standing Conference of Unit Managers (1991) and risk assessments are now being implemented for all projects.
- 3.2 ARCHIVE/REPORT**
- 3.2.1 **Archive:** the results of all archaeological work carried out during fieldwork will form the basis for a full archive to professional standards, in accordance with current English Heritage guidelines (*The Management of Archaeological Projects*, 2nd edition, 1991). The project archive represents the collation and indexing of all the data and material gathered during the course of the project. LUAU conforms to best practice in the preparation of project archives for long-term storage. LUAU practice is to deposit appropriate elements of the original record archive of projects (paper, magnetic and plastic media) with the appropriate County Record Office and a full copy of the record archive (microform or microfiche) together with the material archive (artefacts, ecofacts, and samples) with an appropriate museum. The actual details of the arrangements for the deposition/loan and long term storage of this material will be agreed with the landowner and the receiving institution.
- 3.2.2 **Report:** one bound and one unbound copy of a written synthetic report will be submitted to the client and LCAS within four weeks of completion of fieldwork. The report will consist of an acknowledgements statement, list of contents, introduction, methodology, summary assessment of the results, and conclusions. The report will include a copy of the agreed project design, and indications of any agreed departure from that design. It will present, summarise, and interpret the results of the programme detailed above and will include a full index of archaeological features identified in the course of the project, with an assessment of the overall stratigraphy, together with appropriate illustrations, including detailed plans and sections indicating the locations of archaeological features. Any finds recovered from the excavations will be assessed with reference to other local material and any particular or unusual features of the assemblage will be highlighted. The report will also include a complete bibliography of sources from which data has been derived.
- 3.2.3 This report will identify areas of defined archaeology. An assessment and statement of the actual and potential archaeological significance of the site within the broader context of regional and national archaeological priorities will be made. Illustrative material will include a location map, section drawings, and plans. This report will be in the same basic format as this project design.
- 3.2.4 **Confidentiality:** all internal reports to the client are designed as documents for the specific use of the client, for the particular purpose as defined in the project brief and project design, and should be treated as such. Any requirement to revise or reorder the material for submission or presentation to third parties beyond the project brief and project design, or for any other explicit purpose can be fulfilled, but will require separate discussion and funding.
- 3.3 PROJECT MONITORING**
- 3.3.1 **Lancashire County Archaeological Service:** any proposed changes to the project design will be agreed with the LCAS Archaeologist in co-ordination with the client. LCAS will be informed at the commencement of the project.

- 3.3.2 **Peter Hitchen:** an initial meeting of all parties will be arranged at the commencement of the project, if the client so desires. LUAU will consult regularly with the client during fieldwork, and this will include the attendance of a representative of the client, if required, at any meetings convened with LCAS to discuss the report or any other matter.

4. WORK TIMETABLE

- 4.1 The phases of work would comprise:

4.2 WATCHING BRIEF

- 4.2.1 Monitoring of excavation of top-soil strip, and observation and recording of any archaeological features and materials revealed. The timescale of this phase will be dictated by the construction programme.

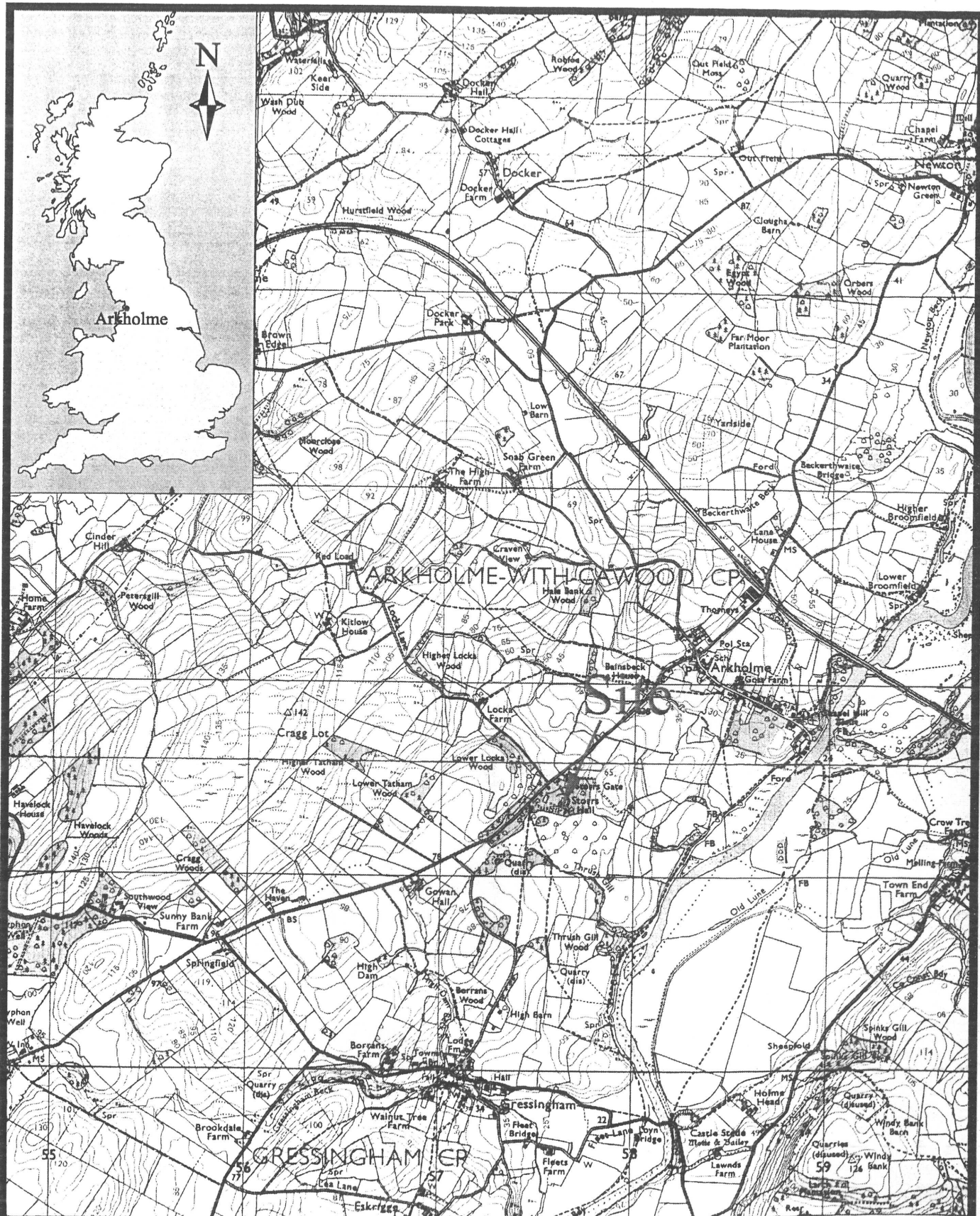
4.3 ARCHIVE/REPORT

- 4.3.1 LUAU generally calculates a 1:0.75 ratio of fieldwork: post-fieldwork (archive, analysis, and report preparation), and this is allowed for in the quoted day-rate.
- 4.3.2 LUAU can execute projects at very short notice once an agreement has been signed with the client. The date for completion of the works would be dictated by the site construction programme. The report will be submitted to the client within four weeks of the completion of fieldwork.
- 4.3.3 The project will be managed by **Jamie Quartermaine BA SurvDip** (Unit Project Manager), to whom all correspondence should be addressed. All Unit staff are experienced, qualified archaeologists, each with several years professional expertise.

ILLUSTRATIONS

Fig 1 Site Location

Fig 2 General Site Map



based upon the Ordnance Survey 1:25000
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Fig 1: Location Map

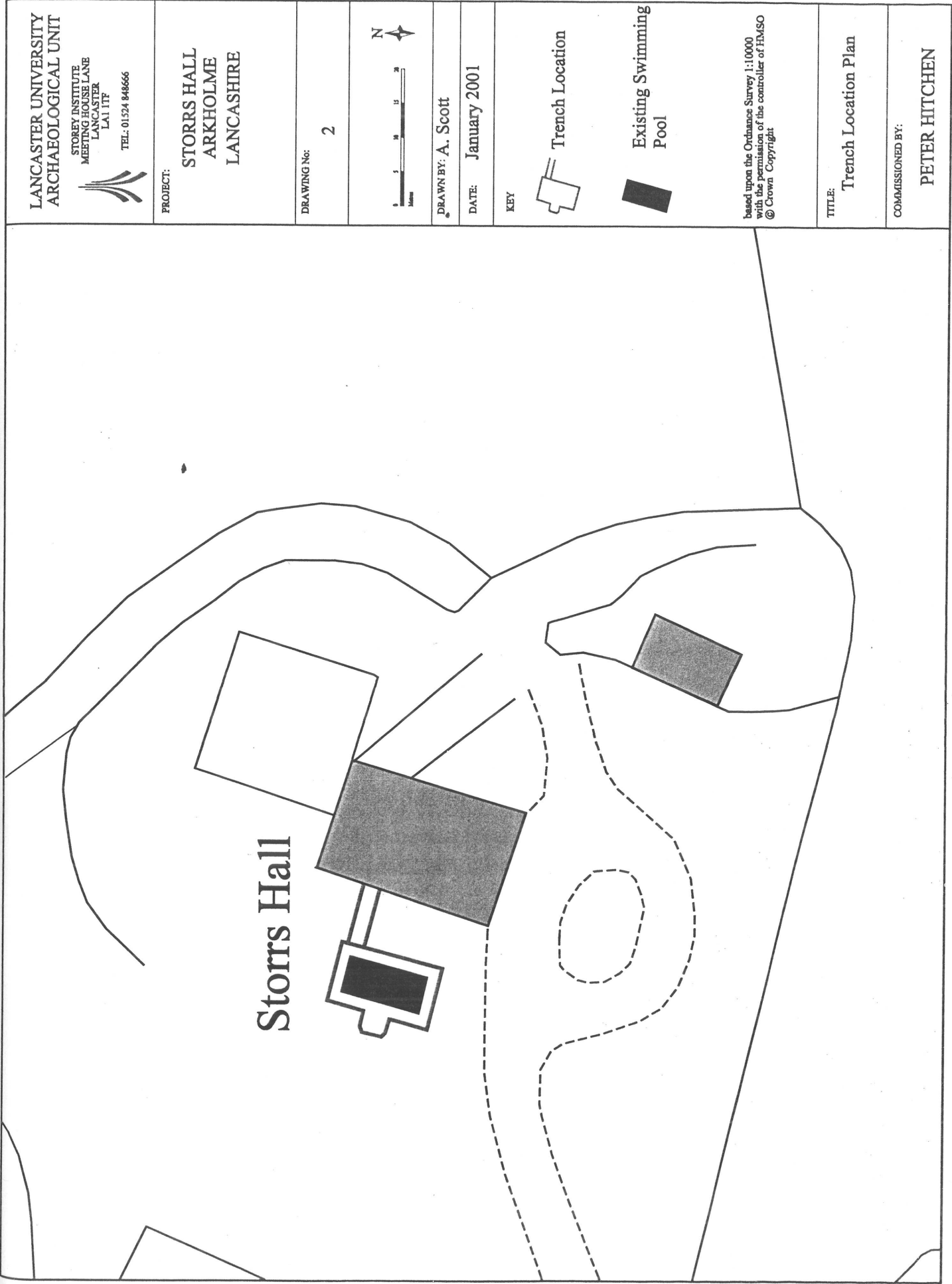


Fig 2: Trench Location Plan

PLATES

- Plate 1 General View of Pool Area
- Plate 2 Area immediately West of the Hall
- Plate 3 Storrs Hall
- Plate 4 Section to the West of the Swimming Pool
- Plate 5 Section to the South of the Swimming Pool



Plate 1: General View of Pool Area



Plate 2: Area immediately West of Hall showing Garden Wall



Plate 3: Storrs Hall (c 1848)



Plate 4: Section to the West of the Swimming Pool



Plate 5: Section to the South of the Swimming Pool Showing Hardcore