



BEAUMONT HALL, GREEN LANE, BEAUMONT, LANCASHIRE

Archaeological Watching Brief

Oxford Archaeology North



September 2004

Mr JW and Mrs AK Seddon

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SUMMARY

A watching brief was undertaken by Oxford Archaeology North (OA North) in February 2004 at Beaumont Hall, Green Lane, Skerton, Lancaster (centred on SD 4785 6395). The work was commissioned by Mr JW and Mrs AK Seddon following the proposed construction of a new extension to the present building and was carried out during the groundworks associated with the excavation of foundations.

The proposed development area lay adjacent to the west wall of the present building, which was of early seventeenth century origin and listed status. It stood within an area of archaeological sensitivity, occupying the possible site of a medieval monastic grange which dates back to the reign of King John in the early thirteenth century.

During the watching brief the groundworks involved reducing the surface of the development area to a general depth of 0.46m below the current floor level of the existing building, and the excavation of three foundation trenches to a depth of 0.75m below current floor level.

The site of the extension was previously occupied by a 1940's air-raid shelter with a concrete flooring, which was removed in 2002. The current ground surface, therefore, largely comprised rubble and debris from its demolition in a matrix of topsoil and some vegetation. The underlying geology comprised relatively homogenous, undisturbed sandy-clay. There were no archaeological features or finds made during the groundworks.

An assemblage of surface finds taken from the grounds of the hall prior to the works being carried out was presented to OA North for inspection by Mr and Mrs Seddon. The assemblage included a probable cannonball of uncertain date and several sherds of pottery. Much of the ceramic present within the assemblage was provisionally dated to the eighteenth century and was of local interest.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Oxford Archaeology North (OA North) would like to thank Mr JW and Mrs AK Seddon for commissioning the project, and to Mr Frank Huddleston and colleagues of FW Huddleston for their assistance on site.

The watching brief was undertaken by David Tonks who also wrote the report. The drawings were compiled by Emma Carter. The project was managed by Emily Mercer, who also edited the report along with Alison Plummer.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 CIRCUMSTANCES OF THE PROJECT

- 1.1.1 Following the submission of an application to extend the existing building at Beaumont Hall, Green Lane, Lancaster (centred on SD 4785 6395), Lancashire County Archaeology Service (LCAS) recommended that an archaeological watching brief be conducted during the associated groundworks due to the building being of listed status. Accordingly, a watching brief was carried out on 9th February 2004 during the laying of the foundations of the proposed extension. This report sets out the results of the watching brief in the form of a short document.

2. METHODOLOGY

2.1 PROJECT DESIGN

2.1.1 Following a request by the client, a project design (*Appendix 1*) was submitted by OA North for an archaeological watching brief on the area proposed for development as an extension to the existing building. This was carried out in accordance with a verbal brief by LCAS. Following approval of the project design, OA North was commissioned to undertake the work. This was adhered to in full and the work was consistent with the relevant standards and procedures of the Institute of Field Archaeologists and generally accepted best practice.

2.2 WATCHING BRIEF

2.2.1 Close liaison was maintained between OA North staff and the site contractors during the watching brief of the excavations for the development. The programme of field observation accurately recorded the location, extent, and character of any surviving archaeological features. This work comprised observation during the groundworks, the examination of any horizons exposed, and the accurate recording of all archaeological features, horizons and any artefacts found during the excavations. The ground reduction was effected by a mechanical excavator using a 0.9m toothless ditching bucket.

2.2.2 The recording comprised a full description and preliminary classification of features or structures revealed on OA North *pro-forma* sheets, and their accurate location in plan. In addition, a photographic record in colour slide and monochrome formats was compiled.

2.3 ARCHIVE

2.3.1 A full archive of the work undertaken has been produced to a professional standard in accordance with current English Heritage guidelines (English Heritage 1991). The archive will be deposited in the Lancaster County Record Office in Preston, and a copy of the report will be forwarded to the Lancashire Sites and Monuments Record.

3. BACKGROUND

3.1 LOCATION

3.1.1 The site is positioned in Beaumont, a northern suburb of the City of Lancaster in Lancashire, and is situated in the valley floor to the west of the River Lune. (NGR centred SD 47856395; Fig 1). The present building is south facing in grounds bordered by farmland and Green Lane to the south. The proposed extension covers an area of approximately 35m², and is adjacent to the western wall of the existing building (Fig 2).

3.2 TOPOGRAPHY AND GEOLOGY

3.2.1 The site and present building are at the base of a slope rising northwards. This has been slightly terraced to provide a flat platform for the present buildings.

3.2.2 The incised valley of the river Lune opens out onto an extensive till plain. This forms a drumlin field resulting from the movement of glaciers southward from the Westmorland Fells, Yorkshire Dales Fells and Silverdale and around the Bowland massif (Countryside Commission 1998). Key characteristics of the area comprise broad, relatively flat lowlands enclosed by steeply sloping escarpments which open out into the undulating landscape of the coastal strip (*ibid*). Land use is predominantly sheep and cattle grazing which is enclosed by well maintained hedgerows with mature trees, and stone walls at higher elevations (*ibid*). The drift geology of the area is classed as Cambic stagnoley and urban by the Soil Survey of England and Wales (1983).

3.3 HISTORICAL AND ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

3.3.1 **Introduction:** this historical background is largely compiled from secondary sources and information held on the Lancashire Sites and Monuments Record. It is intended only as a brief summary of archaeological sites and finds in the vicinity, with some relevant historical developments of the present site in Beaumont.

3.3.2 It is possible that the current building occupies the site of a medieval monastic grange. Confusingly, there is also a Beaumont Grange which is located approximately one mile to the north of Beaumont Hall. However, according to Baines (1870), Beaumont Grange was built sometime before 1847 and was formerly called Black Castle (*ibid*).

3.3.3 The history of the site at Beaumont Hall appears a little obscure. It is likely that Beaumont may have been part of the *Neuhuse* of Domesday Book, which was assessed as two ploughlands and held by Earl Tostig in 1066 (Farrer and Brownbill 1914, 59-60). Although the earliest historical record of 'Beaumont' is from an account compiled in c1320 (*op cit*, 138). Warine, son of Orm, received half a plough land in his marriage to Berleta (*op cit*, 60). However, he is recorded together with William Gernet and King John as granting

Stapleton Terne or Staplethorn, now a deserted medieval village, to Furness Abbey. Warine's grant consisted of that of Beaumont and William Gernet's is believed to be adjacent, and were made in alms to the Abbey in promise of receiving a small gift and maintenance during life (*ibid*, 60). However, it was King John who gave Stapleton Terne proper (*op cit*, 138). On a visit either to the abbey or the grange itself, King John had found that the abbot and convent had made a grange on the previously granted lands at Beaumont, but that it was "small and mean" (Baines 1870), and he therefore added a vill of Stapleton Terne for an annual rent of 40s (Farrer and Brownbill 1914, 138). The monks moved their grange to annex it to Beaumont making a single grange and therefore withdrew the tithes to Bolton Church (*ibid*).

- 3.3.4 The estate of Furness Abbey was augmented by other gifts of land, in this and other townships, and was regarded as a manor down to the eighteenth century. After the Dissolution, Beaumont was retained by the Crown until 1628 when it was sold to Edward Ditchfield and others. The abbey's fishing rights in the Lune pertained until 1759 when they were bought by William Bradshaw of Halton (*op cit*, 60).
- 3.3.5 It is thought that the current building has its origins in the early seventeenth century. It retains features pertinent to this period including a stone fireplace surround clearly dated 1602. The building was extended to its present size in the nineteenth century (Mr Seddon, pers comm).
- 3.3.6 There have been several archaeological stray finds within the vicinity of the site, including a prehistoric flint flake, a Romano-British trumpet brooch, a medieval Edward IV silver groat, a medieval silver spoon and a silver half-groat of Elizabeth I. Several Roman and medieval sherds of pottery have been recovered from the area and there are known medieval remains at nearby Carus Farm (M Seddon pers comm).

4. RESULTS

4.1 OBSERVATIONS

- 4.1.1 **Introduction:** two phases of groundworks within the proposed development area were observed during 9th February 2004. Firstly, a ground reduction exercise to a level 0.46m below the current floor of the existing building, and the subsequent excavation of three deeper foundation trenches to a level 0.75m below the existing floor, equating to around 0.8m below current ground surface.
- 4.1.2 **Ground Reduction:** following removal of the air-raid shelter in 2002, which had previously occupied the site, the ground surface largely comprised a shallow layer of modern detritus, with inclusions of modern glazed pot, salt-glazed drain and occasional fragments of plastic. This was observed in a matrix of dark grey sandy-clay topsoil with some vegetative cover. This sealed a natural subsoil, comprising compacted mid to light brown very sandy-clay with c5% sub-angular to sub-rounded stones and occasional cobbles. There were no archaeological horizons or deposits encountered
- 4.1.3 **Trench 1:** Trench 1 (Plate 1) was oriented east/west and measured c5.0m x 0.9m x 0.8m. The excavated material was identical to that encountered during the ground reduction, consisting of demolition rubble overlying natural soils (Section 4.1.2) and there were no archaeological horizons or deposits encountered.
- 4.1.4 **Trench 2:** Trench 2 (Plate 2) was oriented north/south and measured c6.5m x 0.9m x 0.8m. The excavated material was identical to that encountered during the ground reduction, consisting of demolition rubble overlying natural soils (Section 4.1.2) and there were no archaeological horizons or deposits encountered.
- 4.1.5 **Trench 3:** Trench 3 (Plate 3) was oriented east/west and measured c5.0m x 0.9m x 0.80m. The excavated material was identical to that encountered during the ground reduction, consisting of demolition rubble overlying natural soils (Section 4.1.2) and there were no archaeological horizons or deposits encountered.

4.2 FINDS

- 4.2.1 No finds of archaeological significance were recovered during the watching brief, but stray surface finds, previously recovered by the client from within the grounds of Beaumont Hall, were presented to OA North for inspection. The assemblage comprised five sherds of glazed ceramic, one sandstone sphere (Plate 4) and two unidentified roughly spherical objects. The dates given in the following table are entirely spot dates given in the absence of a secure archaeological context and cannot be considered as definitive. Similarly, the descriptions and interpretations are inconclusive.

Material	Description	Possible date
Ceramic	1 neck sherd salt-glazed Belham Fulham stoneware	late 18 th /early 19 th century
Ceramic	1 small sherd blackware	18 th century
Ceramic	1 sherd brown stoneware in Nottingham fashion	probably 18 th century, possibly earlier
Ceramic	1 sherd blue transfer printed white glazed white earthenware in a chinoiserie pattern	late 18 th /early 19 th century
Ceramic	tin glazed earthenware, hand-painted	17 th /18 th century
Unknown	2 x small spherical objects c5cm and 3cm in diameter. Origin unknown, possibly naturally occurring calcium carbonate nodules	Unknown
Sandstone	1 x sandstone sphere c10cm in diameter. Possible cannonball, possible counterweight.	Unknown

Table 1 : Stray finds presented by the Client

5. DISCUSSION

5.1 CONCLUSIONS

- 5.1.1 Beaumont Hall and its environs are of undoubted historical and archaeological importance as it occupies the possible site of a medieval monastic grange dating back to the reign of King John in the early thirteenth century. In addition, some interesting post-medieval stray finds have been made by the current owner within the grounds of the property. However, the site of the extension was previously occupied by a 1940's World War II air-raid shelter with a concrete flooring which was removed in 2002. The upper layers of the site to be impacted by the development were, therefore, very heavily disturbed. Consequently, there were no archaeological features or finds made during the groundworks and it was evident that the development would have little impact on any archaeological remains.

6. BIBLIOGRAPHY

6.1 PRIMARY SOURCES

Ordnance Survey 1983 Soil Survey of England and Wales

6.2 SECONDARY SOURCES

Baines, E, 1870 *The History of the County Palatine and Duchy of Lancaster*, **2**, Manchester

Countryside Commission, 1998 *Countryside Character, Volume 2: North West*, Cheltenham

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

Farrer, W, Brownbill, MA 1914 *The Victoria History of the Counties of England: Lancashire*, **8** London

APPENDIX 1: PROJECT DESIGN

**Oxford
Archaeology
North**

January 2004

BEAUMONT HALL, GREEN LANE, SLYNE WITH HEST, LANCASTER, LANCASHIRE

WATCHING BRIEF

PROJECT DESIGN

Proposals

The following project design is offered in response to a request by Mr and Mrs Seddon for an archaeological watching brief in advance of the proposed development at Beaumont Hall, Green Lane, Lancaster.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 BACKGROUND

1.1.1 Mr and Mrs Seddon (hereafter the client) has requested that Oxford Archaeology North (OA North) undertake a watching brief at the site at Beaumont Hall, Green Lane, Slyne with Hest, Lancaster, Lancashire. Listed Building Consent has been granted for the development at the site of an extension to form a garden area (reference 03/00793/LB) with a requirement for an archaeological watching brief during groundworks. This project design has been prepared in accordance with a verbal brief from Lancashire County Archaeology Service (LCAS).

1.1.2 The development area is of importance as it is likely that it occupies the site of the medieval Beaumont Grange. The current building dates to the early seventeenth century. However, the earliest historical record is 1320. The site of the garden room is also on the former site of a 1940s air raid shelter. This was demolished in 2002 with the consent of the Local Authority.

1.2 OXFORD ARCHAEOLOGY NORTH

1.2.1 OA North has considerable experience of the assessment of sites of all periods, having undertaken a great number of small and large-scale projects during the past 24 years. Such evaluations have taken place within the planning process, to fulfil the requirements of clients and planning authorities, to very rigorous timetables.

1.2.2 OA North has the professional expertise and resources to undertake the project detailed below to a high level of quality and efficiency. OA North is an Institute of Field Archaeologists (IFA) **registered organisation, registration number 17**, and all its members of staff operate subject to the IFA Code of Conduct.

2 OBJECTIVES

2.1 The following programme has been designed to provide for accurate recording of any archaeological deposits that may be encountered during the excavation of the footings using a mechanical digger for the proposed development.

2.2 **Watching brief:** a watching brief, during associated ground disturbance, will determine the quality, extent and importance of any archaeological remains on the site.

2.3 **Report and Archive:** a report will be produced for the client within eight weeks of completion of the fieldwork. A site archive will be produced to English Heritage guidelines (MAP 2) and in accordance with the *Guidelines for the Preparation of Excavation Archives for Long Term Storage* (UKIC 1990).

3 METHOD STATEMENT

3.1 WATCHING BRIEF

3.1.1 **Methodology:** a programme of field observation will accurately record the location, extent, and character of any surviving archaeological features and/or deposits during the excavation of the footings for the garden room. This work will comprise observation during the excavation, the systematic examination of any subsoil horizons exposed during the course of the groundworks, and the accurate recording of all archaeological features and horizons, and any artefacts, identified during observation.

3.1.2 The watching brief should cover the whole of the area to be disturbed by the development including building foundations, service trenches and other earthmoving activities.

3.1.3 Putative archaeological features and/or deposits identified by the machining process, together with the immediate vicinity of any such features, will be cleaned by hand, using either hoes, shovel scraping, and/or trowels depending on the subsoil conditions, and where appropriate

sections will be studied and drawn. Any such features will be sample excavated (ie. selected pits and postholes will normally only be half-sectioned, linear features will be subject to no more than a 10% sample, and extensive layers will, where possible, be sampled by partial rather than complete removal).

- 3.1.4 It is assumed that OA North will have the authority to stop the works for a sufficient time period to enable the recording of important deposits. It may also be necessary to call in additional archaeological support if a find of particular importance is identified or a high density of archaeology is discovered, but this would only be called into effect in agreement with the Client and LCAS and will require a variation to costing. Also, should evidence of burials be identified, the 1857 Burial Act would apply and a Home Office Licence would be sought. This would involve all work ceasing until the proper authorities were happy for burials to be removed. 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 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). Features will be planned accurately at appropriate scales and annotated on to a large-scale plan provided by the Client. A photographic record will be undertaken simultaneously.
- 3.1.6 A plan will be produced of the areas of groundworks showing the location and extent of the ground disturbance and one or more dimensioned sections will be produced.
- 3.1.7 **Contingency plan:** in the event of significant archaeological features being encountered during the watching brief, discussions will take place with the Archaeologist LCAS as to the extent of further works to be carried out. Any further works required prior to an archaeological evaluation would be subject to a variation to this project design. In the event of environmental/organic deposits being present on site, it would be necessary to discuss and agree a programme of palaeoenvironmental sampling and or dating with LCAS.
- 3.1.8 **Health and Safety:** OA North 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 Archaeological Unit Managers (1991). OA North will liaise with the client to ensure all health and safety regulations are met. A risk assessment will be completed in advance of any on-site works.
- 3.1.7 Full regard will, of course, be given to all constraints (services etc) during the survey, as well as to all Health and Safety considerations. If there is a requirement to excavate trenches deeper than 1.25m the trenches will be stepped out to minimise section collapse.

3.2 ARCHIVE/REPORT

- 3.2.1 **Archive:** the results of all archaeological work carried out will form the basis for a full archive to professional standards, in accordance with current English Heritage guidelines (*Management of Archaeological Projects*, 2nd edition, 1991) and the *Guidelines for the Preparation of Excavation Archives for Long Term Storage* (UKIC 1990). The project archive represents the collation and indexing of all the data and material gathered during the course of the project. The deposition of a properly ordered and indexed project archive in an appropriate repository is considered an essential and integral element of all archaeological projects by the IFA in that organisation's code of conduct.
- 3.2.2 **Report:** should a report be required for the watching brief this shall be submitted as one bound and one unbound copy of a written synthetic report to the client, and a copy submitted to the County Archaeological Officer and to the Lancashire SMR as a paper copy and digital copy on CD within eight weeks of completion of fieldwork. The report will include a copy of this project design, and indications of any agreed departure from that design. It will present, summarise, and interpret the results of the programme detailed above

- 3.2.3 **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. They are not suitable for publication as academic documents or otherwise without amendment or revision.

4 PROJECT MONITORING

- 4.1 Monitoring of this project will be undertaken through the auspices of the Archaeologist LCAS, who will be informed of the start and end dates of the work.

5 WORK TIMETABLE

- 5.1 The duration of the archaeological presence for the watching brief is as yet unknown, being dictated by the schedule of works.
- 5.2 The client report will be completed within eight weeks following completion of the fieldwork.

6 STAFFING

- 6.1 The project will be under the direct management of **Emily Mercer BA (Hons) MSc AIFA** (OA North Senior Project Manager) to whom all correspondence should be addressed.
- 6.2 The watching brief will be supervised in the field by either an OA North project officer or supervisor experienced in this type of project. All OA North project officers and supervisors are experienced field archaeologists capable of carrying out projects of all sizes.
- 6.3 Present timetabling constraints preclude detailing at this stage exactly who will be undertaking the watching brief element of the project.

7 INSURANCE

- 7.1 OA North has a professional indemnity cover to a value of £2,000,000; proof of which can be supplied as required.

REFERENCES

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

Institute of Field Archaeologists (IFA), 1992 *Guidelines for data collection and compilation*

United Kingdom Institute for Conservation (UKIC), 1990 *Guidelines for the preparation of archives for long-term storage*

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Figure 2: Trench location plan

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Plate 2: Trench 2 facing south

Plate 3: Trench 3 facing east

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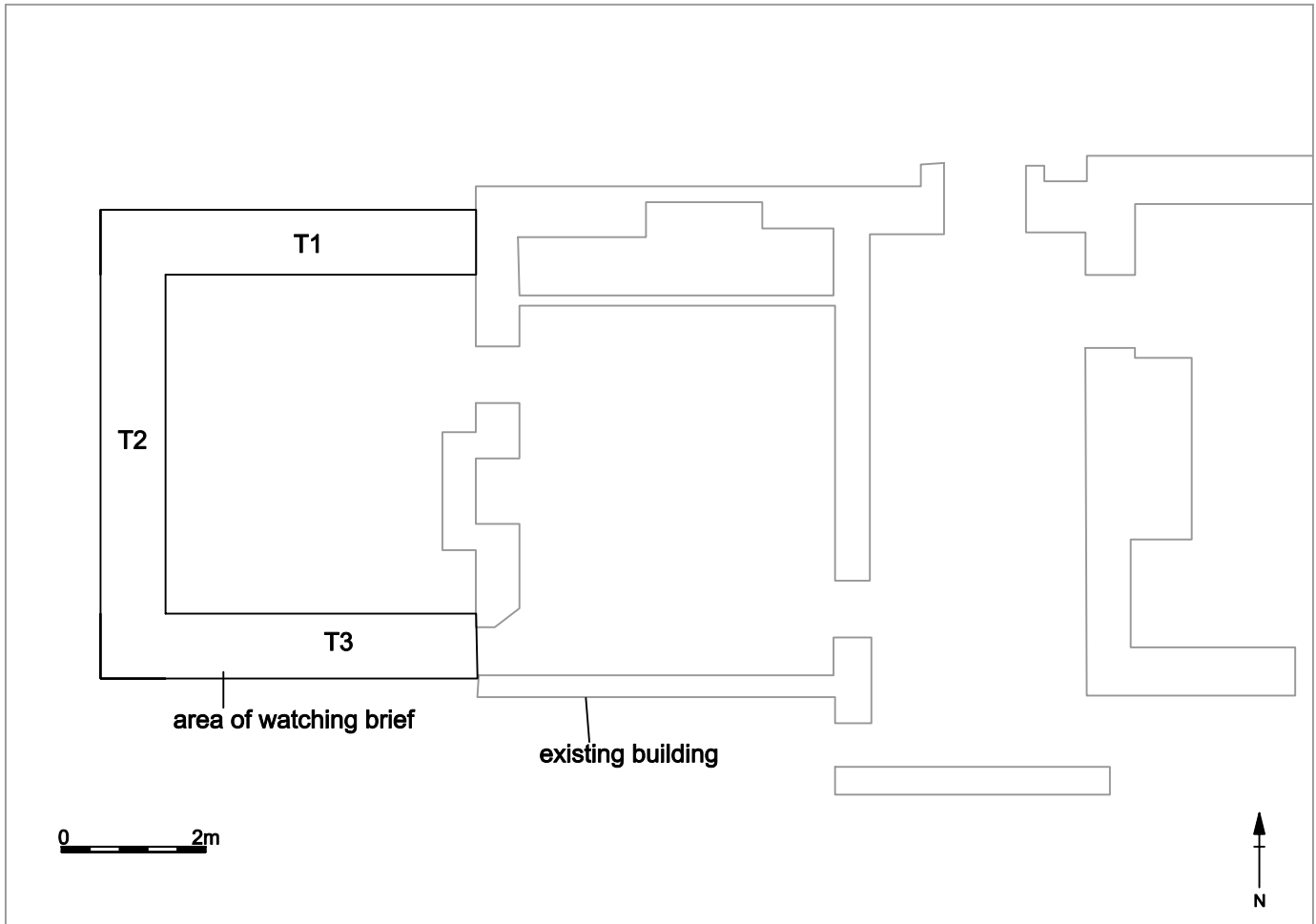
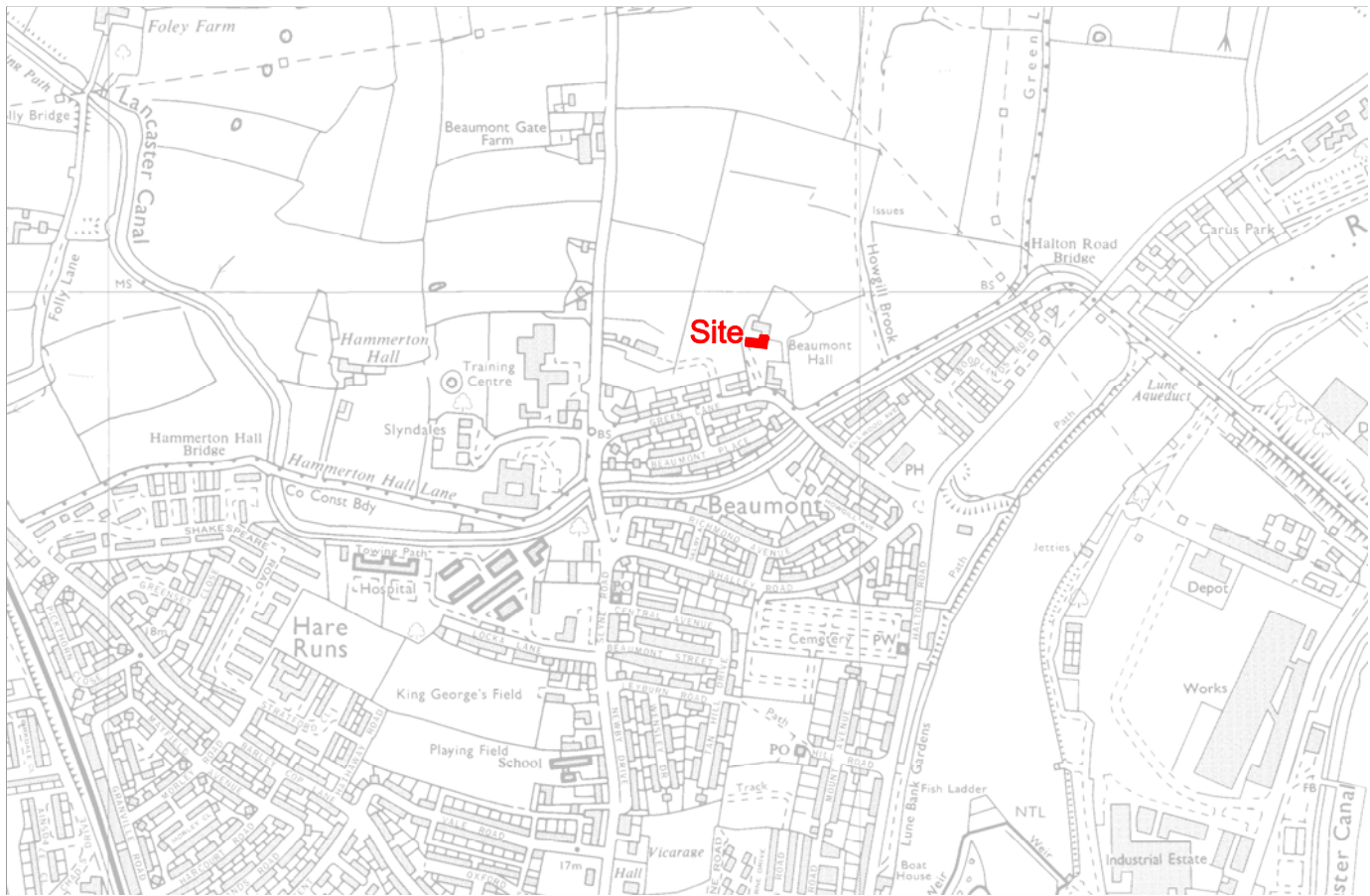


based upon the Ordnance Survey 1:100000
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0 2500m

Figure 1: Location map



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Figure 2: Trench location plan



Plate 1 : Trench 1 facing east



Plate 2 : Trench 2 facing south



Plate 3 : Trench 3 facing east



Plate 4 : Stone Sphere, 0.2m scale