

birmingham archaeology



**THE UNIVERSITY
OF BIRMINGHAM**

**Severn Trent Water
Mains Diversion,
University Hospital Birmingham
2003**



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**Severn Trent Water
Mains Diversion,
University Hospital Birmingham
Archaeological Advice 2003**

by
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**SEVERN TRENT WATER, MAINS DIVERSION
UNIVERSITY HOSPITAL BIRMINGHAM**

ARCHAEOLOGICAL ADVICE 2003

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1.0: INTRODUCTION

Birmingham Archaeology was commissioned in October 2003 by Haswell Consulting Engineers to provide archaeological advice concerning proposals to re-locate a length of the existing Elan Aqueduct in the vicinity of Metchley Roman forts. Parts of the fort defences and interior are protected as Scheduled Ancient Monuments. Other parts of the fort interior and defences are identified for preservation by record (excavation followed by publication of the results) in advance of hospital and other development proposals. Some of the areas for preservation by record have been excavated, while others remain to be excavated in 2004.

This brief report considers the possible archaeological effects of the mains diversion, and outlines measures which may be required to mitigate their effects on the below-ground archaeology.

The route of the proposed main crosses the southwestern corner of Metchley Roman fort (Jones 2002, Figure 1). This Roman military complex was first established around AD 50, and continued in use for up to 150 years. Its remains include the surrounding defensive ditches and earthen banks, traces of timber-framed buildings and other features including pits and stone-surfaced internal roads. To the west of the fort was established a civilian settlement occupied mainly in the mid 1st century AD. The Phase 1 fort is dated to the mid 1st century, and encloses approximately 4 ha (Figure 1, dark green outline). This fort was later extended by the addition of ditched annexes on at least three sides (Phase 2A, light green outlines). Subsequently, the fort interior was used as a military stores depot. Later, a smaller fort enclosing 2.6 ha (Phase 3, orange outline) was built in the centre of the earlier fort, and some, low-level Roman military and civilian activity continued there until the end of the 2nd century AD (Phase 4, not illustrated in detail).

2.0: DIVERSION SCHEME EFFECTS

Discussion of the scheme effects is based on DWG. 11069-W009 -06.

2.1: Abandonment

A length of the existing Elan Aqueduct will be abandoned. This stretch of the service lies outside Metchley Roman forts and the associated settlement, and no other archaeological interests are presently recorded in this area.

2.2: New main

The proposed new length of the main between the Boiler House in the north, and the Bourn Brook in the south lies outside Metchley Roman forts, and no other archaeological interests which may survive are presently recognised along this length of the route. A mapped ditch and possible bank forming the southern boundary of Metchley hunting park has been recognised immediately to the north of the Bourn Brook (Jones 1999). It is very unlikely that the ditch and bank will survive in any recognisable form in this area, since this leg of the new main follows the line of the original main, or is likely to run within the area disturbed by its predecessor.

To the north of the Boiler House the new main will be routed along the line of its predecessor, and there will be no archaeological effects along this length of the new main.

2.3: Proposed working width

The detailed drawing shows that a working width of up to 25m will be retained along the line of the new main, both to the east and west of the existing Service Road. To the west of the Service Road it is important that the working width excludes areas identified for future archaeological excavation in connection with the hospital development (Figure 1), to ensure that the integrity of archaeological deposits is not compromised prior to their detailed hand excavation. Areas proposed for excavation in 2004 include the existing Ambulance Compound, the adjoining 'Mock-Up' Building, and the rough ground to the south of the Ambulance Compound. There are no archaeological implications of the use of the full working width to the east of, or along the line of, the existing Hospital Service Road.

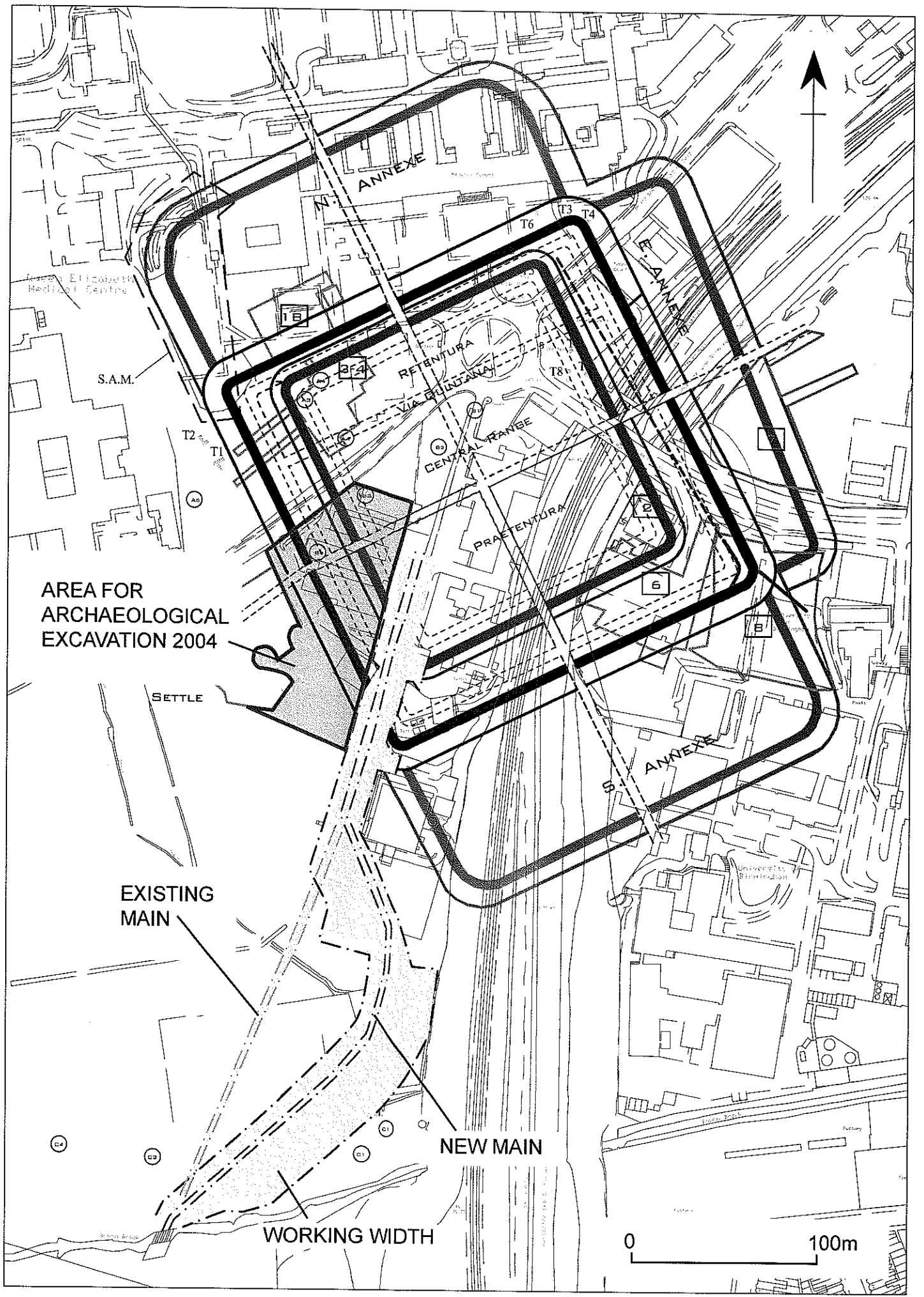
Other areas within adjoining parts of the fort complex are presently designated as Scheduled Ancient Monuments (Figure 2, note in particular SM 35120.05 adjoining the western side of the Hospital Service Road). These areas cannot be used for open storage, and no vehicle movement across them must be permitted.

3.0: SUGGESTED MITIGATION

3.1: Avoidance of areas proposed for future archaeological excavation.

Areas for future excavation should be excluded from the fenced working corridor area, to exclude any possibility of disturbance before the below-ground remains are recorded in detail during 2004. The extent of future excavation shown on Figure 2 is indicative only. More detailed plans of the areas proposed for excavation can be supplied on request.

Areas to the west of the Boiler House are currently earmarked for archaeological excavation in early 2004, which would involve the passage of mechanical excavators and other vehicles along the Hospital Service Road.



AREA FOR
ARCHAEOLOGICAL
EXCAVATION 2004

EXISTING
MAIN

NEW MAIN

WORKING WIDTH

0 100m

Fig.1

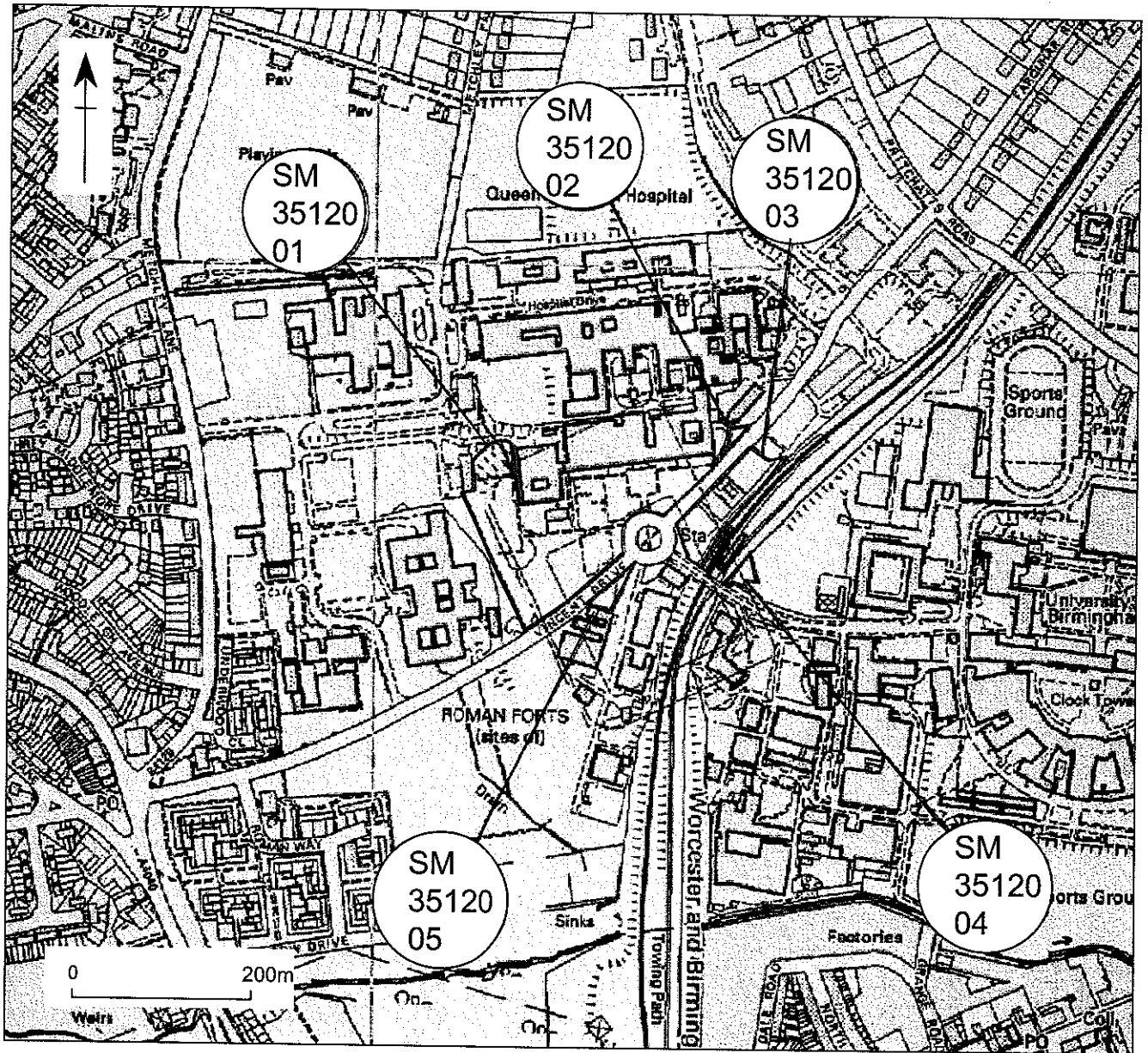


Fig.2