

Archaeological Evaluation  
of land at  
**NOS. 25-43 PILEMARSH,  
ST.GEORGE, BRISTOL.**  
for  
Mr M Simmons & Mr S Munden



Report No. 1247/2004  
BSMR No. 21816



Bristol and Region Archaeological Services

Archaeological Evaluation  
of land at  
**NOS. 25-43 PILEMARSH,  
ST.GEORGE, BRISTOL.**

Centred on  
N.G.R. ST 6167 7335

Client: Mr M Simmons & Mr S Munden  
Agent: Mark Snook Planning

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### NOTE

Notwithstanding that Bristol and Region Archaeological Services have taken reasonable care to produce a comprehensive summary of the known and recorded archaeological evidence, no responsibility can be accepted for any omissions of fact or opinion, however caused.

January, 2004.

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## **SUMMARY**

In December 2003 Bristol and Region Archaeological Services carried out an archaeological evaluation at 25-43 Pilemarsh, St. George, Bristol. Two small trenches were excavated on the site. Of the two trenches, Trench 1 revealed no features pre-dating the early 19th century while Trench 2 revealed archaeological deposits and a small amount of dating evidence to suggest occupation during the Romano-British period.

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 Bristol and Region Archaeological Services (BaRAS) were commissioned by Mr M. Simmons and Mr S. Munden to carry out an archaeological evaluation at 25-43 Pilemarsh, St. George, Bristol (Fig.1). The site was intended for development as residential accommodation.
- 1.2 Planning Policy Guidance Note 16: Archaeology and Planning, issued by the Department of Environment in 1990, sets out the requirement for developers to provide sufficient information on the archaeological impact of development to enable a reasonable planning decision to be made. Local Plan Policy B22, while stating that there should be a presumption in favour of the preservation of nationally important archaeological features and sites, outlines the process to be followed in order that the archaeological importance of a site may be determined and mitigation strategies put in place if necessary (see Appendix 1).
- 1.3 An archaeological desktop study of the site had already been carried out and the results were compiled in July 2003 (BaRAS Report 1197/2003, BSMR No. 21713). Recommendations were made in that study for further archaeological work at the site to establish the nature and extent of any archaeological activity on the site.
- 1.4 A programme of archaeological evaluation involving the excavation of two trial trenches was requested by the City Archaeologist to provide sufficient information to enable the importance of any surviving archaeology to be assessed in local and national terms and to guide the production of detailed design solutions for the site. These solutions will either achieve the preservation *in situ* of the archaeological resource or involve a further programme of recording by excavation, watching brief or a combination of both.
- 1.5 The fieldwork took place between the 3rd and 8th of December 2003 and was supervised by Rachel Heaton who subsequently compiled this report. Dave Stevens was responsible for the site survey and Ann Linge produced the illustrations. A copy of the report will be submitted to the Bristol Sites and Monuments Record (BSMR) under the number 21816. The archive will be deposited with Bristol City Museum and Art Gallery under the Accession Number BRSMG 2003/89.

## 2. THE SITE

- 2.1 The site is centred on NGR ST 6167 7335, and is bounded on the south by Pilemarsh, north by residential properties on Lewin Street and Claremont Terrace, west by George and Dragon Lane and east by No. 45 Pilemarsh (Fig.1). It covers an area of approximately 889 square metres and is currently occupied by commercial buildings and concrete yard surfaces.
- 2.2 The site lies at approximately 37 aOD, with a gradual slope down from north-east to south-west. The geology comprises sandstones of the Triassic period.

### 3. ARCHAEOLOGICAL & HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

- 3.1 There is currently no evidence for prehistoric occupation of the study area.
- 3.2 Although no direct evidence had been found for occupation of the site during the Roman period (after AD 43), the surrounding area has produced some significant Romano-British finds.
- 3.3 In early 1894, excavation of a sewer trench opposite what is now 11-15 Roseberry Road, Redfield, uncovered more than fifteen inhumations (BSMR 3027). Fragments of a lead coffin thought to be of Roman date and a sherd of pottery were also recovered (Russell and Williams, 1984).
- 3.4 A further inhumation was discovered on the 10th of April 2002 during underpinning works at 148 Victoria Avenue, Redfield (BSMR 21201). A sample of the bone was submitted for radiocarbon dating and was dated to  $1573 \pm 68\text{BP}$ , which was calibrated to 340-640AD (95% confidence).
- 3.5 Historically the site lay within the parish of St. Philip and St. Jacob Without and formed part of the Barton Regis Hundred (Morris 1982, 1,21). At the time of the Domesday Survey in 1086, Barton Regis Hundred was held by King William. The estate later passed to the Berkeley family. After 1608, the estate lands were gradually broken up and control dispersed to a number of noble families (BaRAS report 1197/2003).
- 3.6 The Parish of St. George was created in 1756 and lay outside of the control of the city of Bristol until 1897.
- 3.7 Prior to the early 19th century there was little development in the area of the site. The 1803 survey of St. George showed the land divided into field plots with a number of scattered structures (Fig.2).
- 3.8 The 1842 Tithe map of St. George showed a number of small cottages occupying the evaluation site, surrounded largely by open land (Fig.3).
- 3.9 The expansion of industry throughout the later half of the 19th century led to an increase in the construction of working class dwellings. This was well represented by the 1881 Ordnance Survey plan (Fig.4). The row of cottages was still present but was bounded to the north, east and west by terraced houses.
- 3.10 Kelly's Street Directories of Bristol suggest that most of the cottages first seen on the 1842 Tithe map disappear during the early part of the 20th Century. Only one cottage survives (No. 45), just outside the site bounding it on the east side.
- 3.11 The site is currently occupied by two small industrial units.

#### **4. STUDY OBJECTIVES**

- 4.1 The evaluation will determine the extent and date range of archaeological deposits and features and to make a record of everything found.

#### **5. METHODOLOGY**

- 5.1 The two evaluation trenches were opened up using a 180° mechanical excavator equipped with a breaker and toothless bucket. The trenches were then hand cleaned, photographed, drawn, levelled in relation to Ordnance Survey datum and recorded using the BaRAS continuous numbered single context system. Stratified finds were recovered. Where necessary, sondages were excavated to expose the full sequence of stratification.
- 5.2 The two trenches were numbered Trench 1 and Trench 2 accordingly. Trench 1 measured 6.3m x 1.8m. Trench 2 formed an 'L' shape of 5m x 1.5 and 3m x 1.5m (Fig.5).
- 5.3 The two trenches were located using a total station and related to the Ordnance Survey National Grid. After completion of the work, the trenches were backfilled.

## 6. THE EVALUATION

### Trench 1

- 6.1 Trench 1 was located at the eastern end of the site, parallel with the western wall of cottage No. 45 (Fig.5). The trench measured 6.3m north-south by 1.8m east-west at NGR ST 61701 73355.
- 6.2 The natural yellow/orange sandy-clay (110) was reached in the southern end of the trench at a height of 36.63 aOD. In the northern end of the trench the natural is cut into by archaeological features to a depth of 35.73 aOD (Plate 1).
- 6.3 Upon cleaning the trench a number of features were revealed (Fig.6). Activity was concentrated in the northern quarter of the trench. This section is separated from the rest of the trench by the lowest two courses of a wall (102) orientated east-west across the trench (Plates 2 and 3). To the north of this wall, several deposits could be seen. A sondage was excavated through these deposits to investigate their relationship with 102.
- 6.4 The earliest event revealed in the sondage is the excavation of a ditch (?) (109) which bases at 35.73 aOD. The feature contains three fills. The primary fill (113) is up to 0.10m thick, consisting of pale cream sandy silt, with high lime content containing slate fragments (Plate 12). There was no dating evidence in this fill. The secondary fill (112) is up to 0.05m thick, consisting of blue-grey clay with occasional charcoal inclusions. Again, no dating evidence was recovered from this deposit. The uppermost fill (111) was 0.13m thick, consisting of a loose grey, gravelly silt. One small pottery sherd was recovered from this deposit dating from the mid 1600's to 1800. The profile of 109 shows a gradual slope with a flat base (Fig.7).
- 6.5 The structural feature (102) extends across the width of the trench. It is made from roughly hewn Pennant blocks of varying size, bonded with a pale grey ashy mortar (Plate 2). The construction cut (103) for 102, although truncated by a later feature is evident on the north side of the wall, where redeposited natural sandy clay (104) fills remaining space in the cut. No cut is visible on the south side of the wall as the stones appear to be set up against the natural.
- 6.6 Structure 102, although set back slightly, is on the same alignment as the back wall of the neighbouring property to the east of the site, Cottage No. 45. It can be concluded that 102 is the foundation courses for the back wall of the next cottage along which once stood on this site. Cartographic evidence suggests that these cottages were built between 1806 and 1842.
- 6.7 The construction cut 103 for foundations 102 is truncated by a later cut, context (106), also truncating cut 109. There is one fill, (108) possibly a garden soil, 0.57m thick deposit of firm mid brown sandy silt, containing a moderate amount of small stones and occasional charcoal flecks. A small piece of clay tobacco pipe was recovered from the fill but had no distinguishing features to date it. In profile, 106 has gradually sloping sides with a very flat base at 35.97 aOD. A further feature was cut into 108 (Fig.6) A slot through (105) confirmed that it was a tree bole.
- 6.8 Tarmac and rubble levelling material (100) directly overlies the whole trench. In the northern quarter it overlies the wall foundations 102 and context 108. In the rest of the trench, 100 directly overlies the natural with the exception of a modern pipe trench (115), which is cut into the natural at the southern most point of the trench.

## Trench 2

- 6.9 The trench was located in the north-west area of the yard area currently occupied by Simmons Welding and Fabrication (Fig.5). The trench measured 5m east-west by approximately 1.5m north-south. From the north-west corner, the trench measured 3m north-south by approximately 1.5 m east-west, forming an 'L' shaped slot at NGR ST 61664 73752.
- 6.10 The natural yellow/orange sandy-clay (207) was reached in the east-west arm of the trench at a height of 34.90 aOD (Fig.8).
- 6.11 A broad meandering linear feature (206) was cut into 207, orientated north-east south-west across the trench (Plates 4 and 5). Three sondages across this feature revealed a single fill (205) was 0.37m thick deposit, consisting of firm orange-brown with grey mottle sandy-silt containing occasional flecks of charcoal of varying size. The profile of the feature in section is variable, having gently sloping sides in places becoming quite steep in others with an irregular base (Plates 9, 10 and 11). Upon excavation, the fill produced a small quantity of Romano-British pottery. There was also evidence of animal bone, which was very soft and fragmentary. The bone had clearly been affected by the water table, which is currently rising at the lower levels of this feature, aOD 34.48m. The true extent of the feature remains unknown as it has been disturbed by later activity, notably (203) and is obscured by the edges of the trench.
- 6.12 Overlaying 205 was a 0.2m thick deposit of mid brown firm sandy silt (204). This deposit appeared as a fairly evenly spread layer throughout the trench, reaching a height of aOD 35.09m. Deposit 204 contained small, occasional flecks of charcoal (Fig.9). Dating evidence was limited to one piece of pottery of late medieval period. This deposit may be associated with agricultural activity in this area.
- 6.13 A modern sewer pipe trench (203) cuts through 206 and 204 into the natural soil horizons, on the south side of the trench orientated north-east south-west. The pipe trench is filled with re-deposited clay (202). The pipe runs at approximately 35m aOD (Fig.8).
- 6.14 The top of this trench was filled with two layers of fine demolition rubble (201) and levelling material (200) (Fig.9). Layer 201 is 0.3m thick and consists of a friable, almost black silt-sand, containing fragments of building material. The uppermost point reaches a height of 35.39m aOD. Layer 200 is the uppermost fill of the trench. It is 0.30m thick and consists of mixed grey ash and sand mix. Both layers could be associated with the demolition of the cottages that once stood in this area till the early part of the 20th century and the building of the industrial units that currently occupy the site. The top of the trench is at 35.68 aOD.

## 7. CONCLUSIONS

- 7.1 The evaluation demonstrated that archaeological remains dating back to the Roman period are preserved *in situ*, albeit in a truncated form, within the proposed development area.
- 7.2 In Trench 1 the underlying natural clay is relatively close to the surface and the archaeology exposed dates from the 18th and 19th century. The excavation uncovered foundations for the back wall of a terraced cottage that once stood on the site, garden soils and a possible ditch. There was no clear evidence for any earlier archaeological deposits in this area of the site. This is possibly due to the later disturbances mentioned.
- 7.3 In Trench 2, the underlying natural clay was not as close to the surface as in Trench 1, with thick layers of demolition rubble sealing the archaeological deposits. At a depth of 34.59m aOD a broad meandering waterlogged feature contained some fragments of Romano-British pottery. As only a small percentage of the feature could be excavated interpretation remains inconclusive.
- 7.4 There were no structural remains in Trench 2 that could be associated with the cottage terrace that once stood on the site. This was to be expected, as Trench 2 was located north of the rear terrace wall.

## 8. CONTRACTOR'S ADVICE

- 8.1 The evaluation carried out at 25-43 Pilemarsh recorded evidence of Romano-British activity in Trench 2 at a depth of 34.93 aOD approximately 0.75m below the current ground surface. The archaeological remains preserved *in situ* within the proposed development area are partially waterlogged.
- 8.3 If the programme of proposed development proceeds and is likely to disturb the archaeological remains recorded on the site, then the Archaeological Officer for Bristol is likely to recommend a further programme of work to ensure their preservation by record. This should be carried out in advance of any ground working activity related to the development, so that the extent, layout and character of archaeologically significant remains can be recorded without hindrance.

## 9. BIBLIOGRAPHY AND SOURCES CONSULTED

- BaRAS Report No. 1197      2003 Archaeological Desktop Study of land at 25-43 Pilemarsh, St.George, Bristol by Dave Stevens.
- Bennett, J.                      1972 Excavations at Nazareth House. *City of Bristol Museum and Art Gallery, Monograph No. 3.*
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- Rahtz, P. & Greenfield, E.    1977 Excavations at Chew Valley. *Dept. of the Environment Archaeological Reports, No. 8.* London.
- Russell, J. & Williams, R.    1984 Romano-British Sites in the City of Bristol. *Bristol & Avon Archaeology Vol.3 pp18-26.*
- Tomber, R. and Dore, J.      1998 The National Roman Fabric Reference Collection, A Handbook. *Museum of London Archaeology Service.*
- Tyres, P.                      1996 Roman Pottery in Britain. *B T Batsford Ltd, London.*

### Electronic Sources

Worcestershire On-line Type Series : [www.worcestershireceramics.org](http://www.worcestershireceramics.org).

### Sources in the Bristol Record Office (BRO) including:

AC/PL/60(a-b) Survey Map of 1803.  
EP/A/32/32 St. George Tithe Map, 1842.  
Various editions of Kelly's Directory of Bristol.

### Other cartographic sources:

Various Ordnance Survey maps up to the current revision.  
1:63360 Geological Survey Plan, 1962.

## 10. ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Bristol and Region Archaeological Services would like to thank the site owners; Mr Simmons and his colleagues at Simmons Fabrication and Welding for assistance and patience during the excavation and Mr Munden. Thanks are also due to Les Good and Gail Boyle at Bristol City Museum and Art Gallery for their assistance on pottery identification.

## **APPENDIX 1: Policy Statement**

This report is the result of work carried out in the light of national and local authority policies.

### **NATIONAL POLICIES**

Statutory protection for archaeology is enshrined in the Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act (1979), amended by the National Heritage Act, 1983. Nationally important sites are listed in the Schedule of Ancient Monuments (SAM). Scheduled Monument consent is required for any work which would affect a SAM.

### **DOE PLANNING POLICY GUIDANCE**

The Planning Policy Guidance of Archaeology and Planning (PPG 16) consolidates advice to planning authorities. The Guidance stresses the non-renewable nature of the archaeological resource, details the role of the County Sites and Monuments Record (SMR), encourages early consultation with county and district archaeological officers and sets out the requirement for developers to provide sufficient information on the archaeological impact of development to enable a reasonable planning decision to be made.

PPG 16 also indicates the circumstances where further work would be necessary and outlines the use of agreements and conditions to protect the archaeological resource.

### **DISTRICT POLICY**

Bristol City Council Adopted Local Plan Written Statement (1997) states (policy B22):

- (i) There will be a presumption in favour of preserving any archaeological features or sites of national importance, whether scheduled or not.
- (ii) Development which could adversely affect sites, structures, landscapes or buildings of archaeological interest and their settings will require an assessment of the archaeological resource through a desktop study, and where appropriate a field evaluation. Where there is evidence of archaeological remains, development will not be permitted except where it can be demonstrated that the archaeological features of the site will be satisfactorily preserved in situ, or a suitable strategy has been put forward to mitigate the impact of development proposals upon important archaeological remains and their settings; or, if this is not possible and the sites are not scheduled or of national importance, provision for adequately recording the site prior to destruction is made, preferably by negotiating a planning agreement to ensure that access, time and financial resources are available to allow essential recording and publication to take place.

## APPENDIX 2: THE FINDS

Very few artefacts were recovered from either trench, as displayed in the table below.

Context	Pottery		Clay Pipe		Bone Comments	Slag/Cullet	
	Qty.	Wgt.	Qty.	Wgt.		Qty.	Wgt.
<b>Trench 1</b>							
105					Fragments found	5	13
108			1	3			
111	1	14					
<b>Trench 2</b>							
204	1	15					
205	12	60			Fragments found		
<b>Totals</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>89</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>3</b>		<b>5</b>	<b>13</b>

Qty = Quantity/No. of sherds/pieces.

Wgt = Weight

### The Pottery

The small assemblage of pottery, just 14 sherds, was scanned to identify the pottery types present. The material was identified by comparison with the Bristol Pottery Type Series (Ponsford 1998), Worcestershire On-Line Fabric Type Series, Chew Valley Type Series (Rahtz and Greenfield, 1977) and Sea Mills Type Series (Bennett, 1972).

Only one sherd of pottery was recovered from Trench 1 and dated from the post medieval period.

Trench 2 contained one sherd of medieval pottery and 12 sherds of Romano-British pottery.

### The Pottery Types Present by Context

#### Trench 1

Context 111: BPT 286 x 1 : Base sherd, Donyatt storage jar mid 1600's to 1800.

#### Trench 2

Context 204: BPT 118 x 1 : Body sherd, Bristol/Redcliffe wares typically jugs 1250 – 1350.

Context 205 contained three different fabric types, dating towards the earlier parts of the Romano-British period.

Type 1: Severn Valley Ware (SVW) – Three heavily abraded body sherds, typical forms include tankards and jars. Mid 1st – 4th Century AD.

Type 2: Grey Ware, as Type Fabric Series T, Chew Valley Lake - Four body sherds, with chevron design visible, typical of cooking jars. 2nd Century AD.

Type 3: Coarse Ware, as Type 1V4, Sea Mills – Five body sherds, forms handmade jars. 1st Century AD.

### Other Finds

As the table shows, very few artefacts were retrieved from the excavation. Small fragments of bone were recovered, but were very badly decomposed. This may be the result of a high water table and high acidity in the soil.



Fig.1 Site location plan showing SMR sites, scale 1:1750



Fig.2 Survey of the Parish of St. George by William Maule, 1803

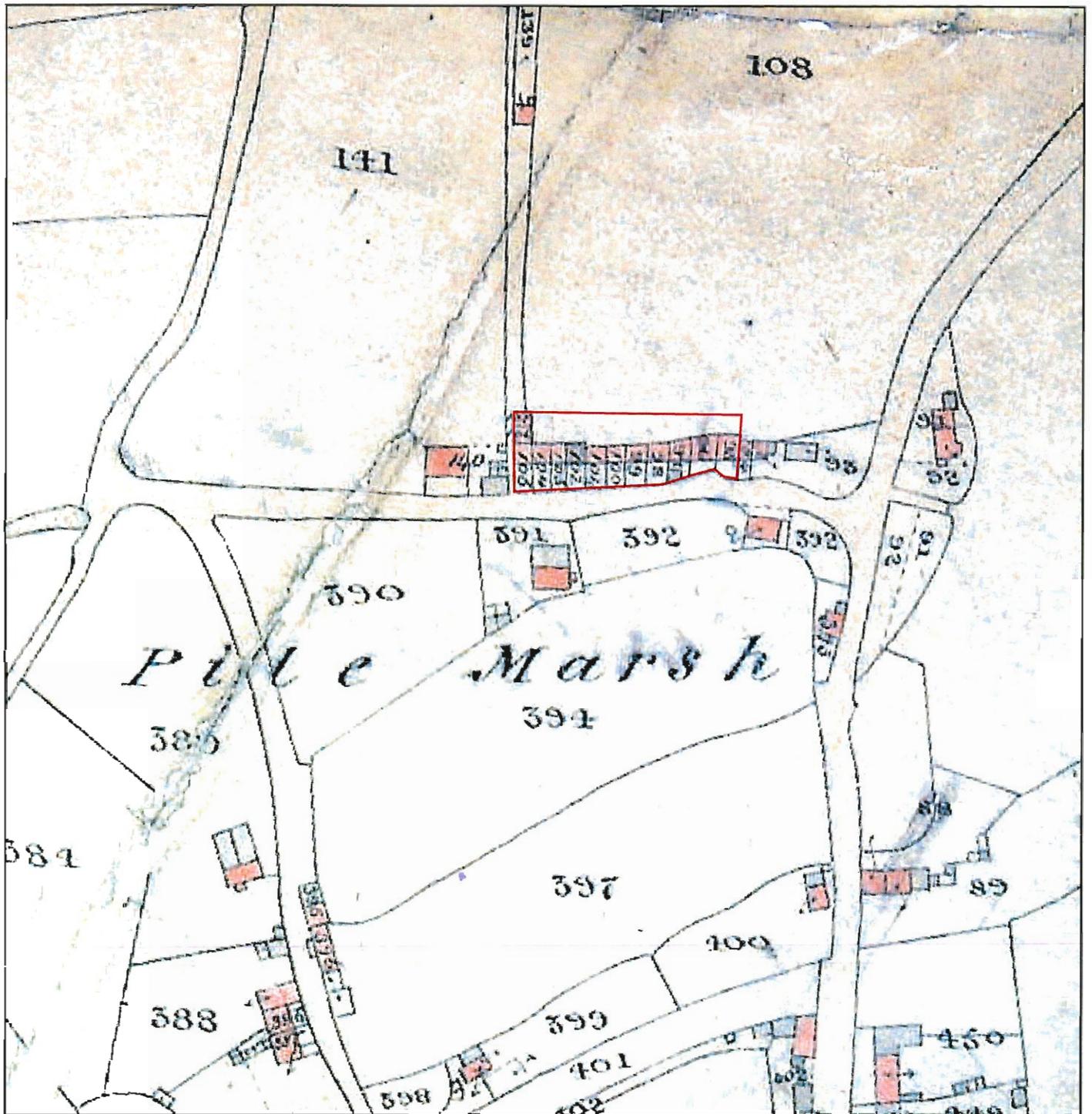


Fig.3 Map of the Parish of St. George by D. Harwood, 1842



Fig.4 First Edition Ordnance Survey map, 1881, scale 1:500

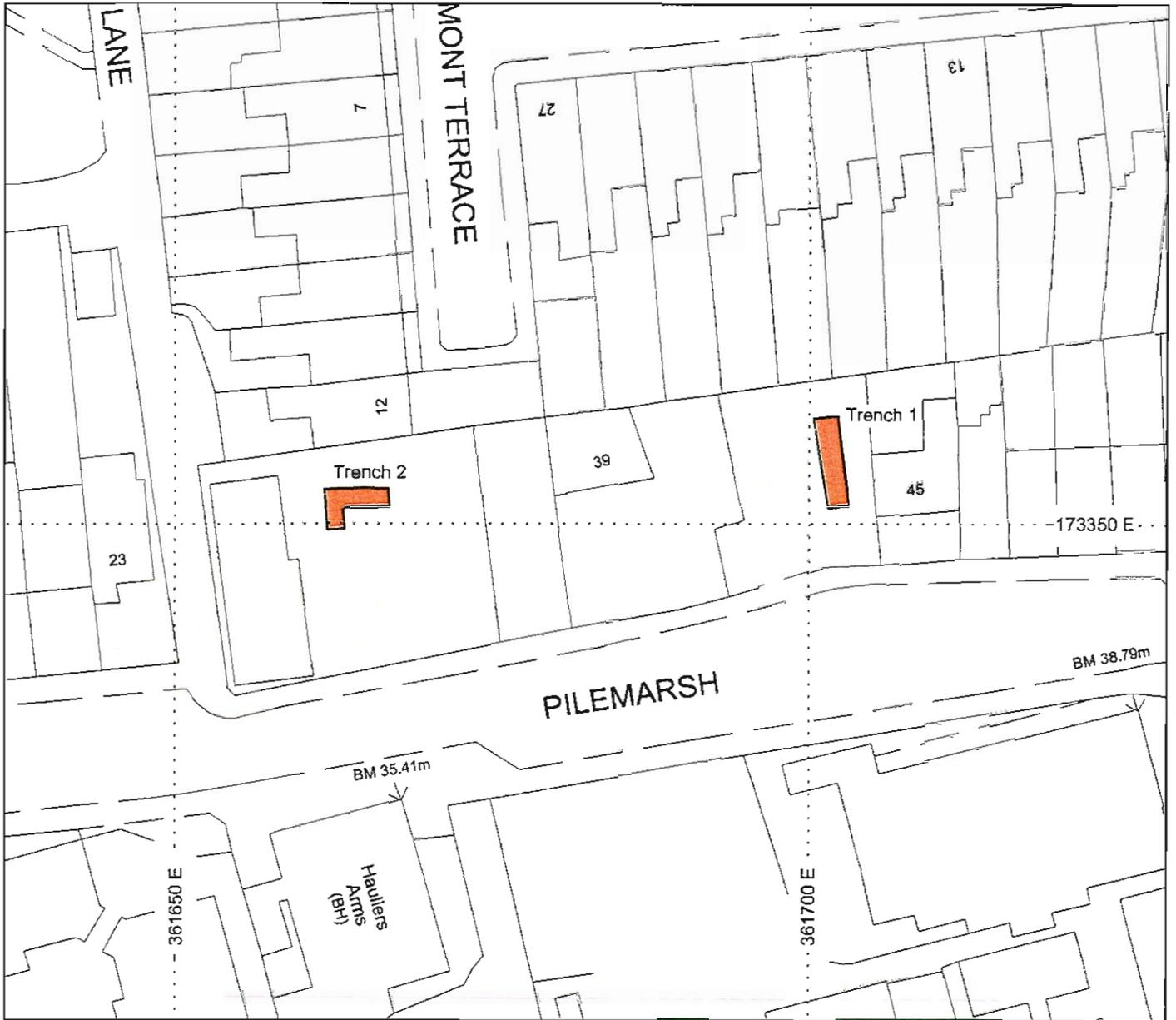


Fig. 5 Trench location plan, scale 1:500

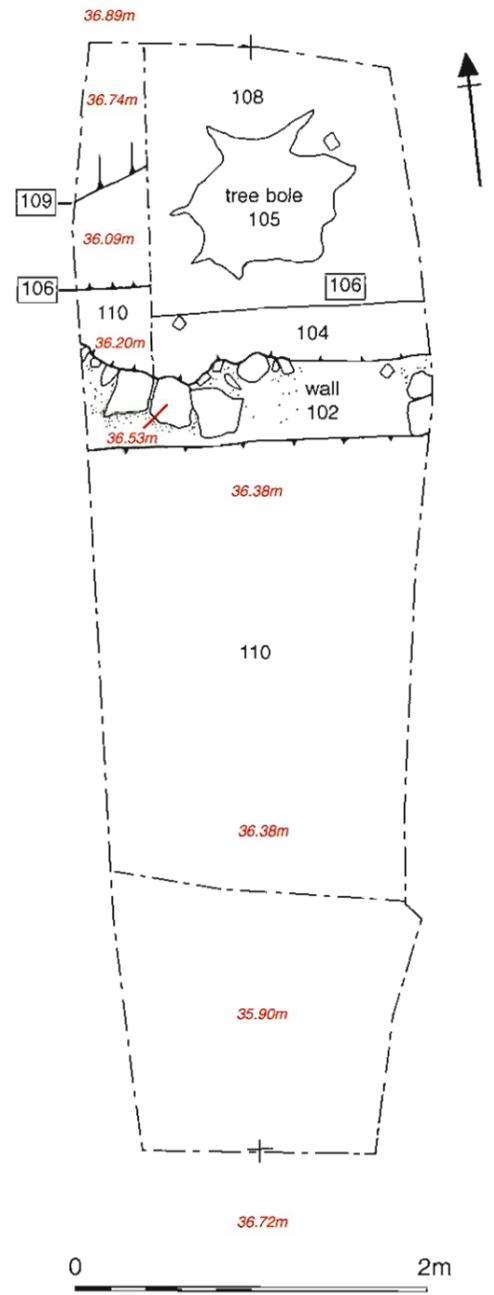


Fig.6 Plan of Trench 1, scale 1:40

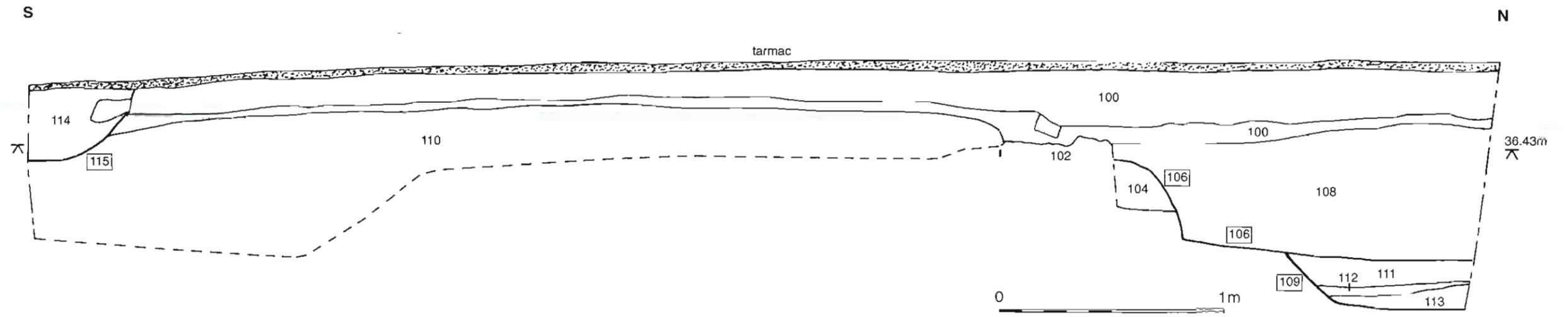


Fig.7 Trench I section, scale 1:20

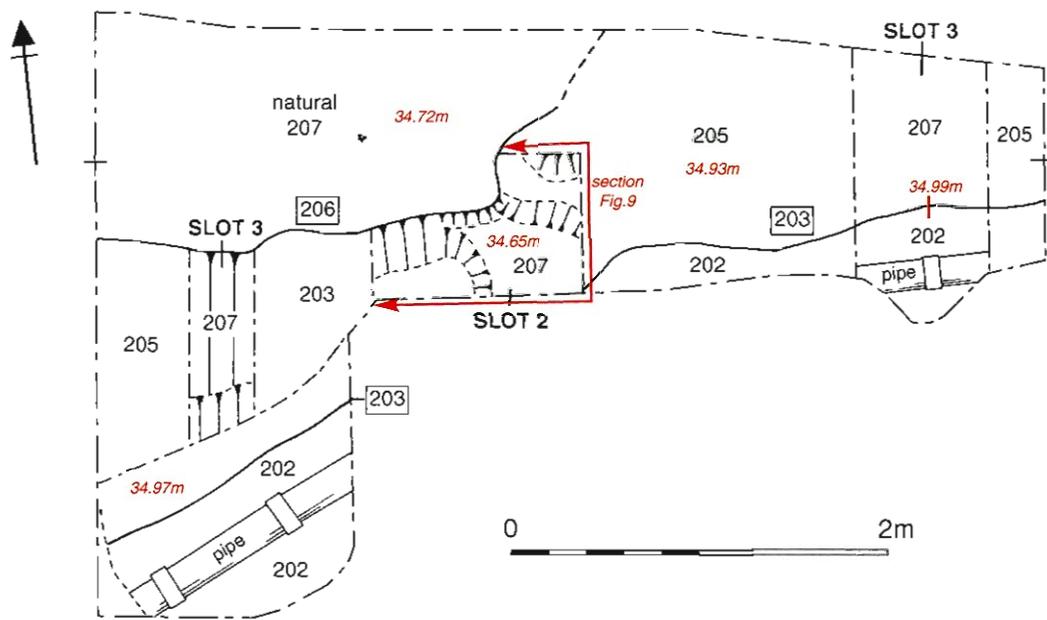


Fig.8 Plan of Trench 2, scale 1:40

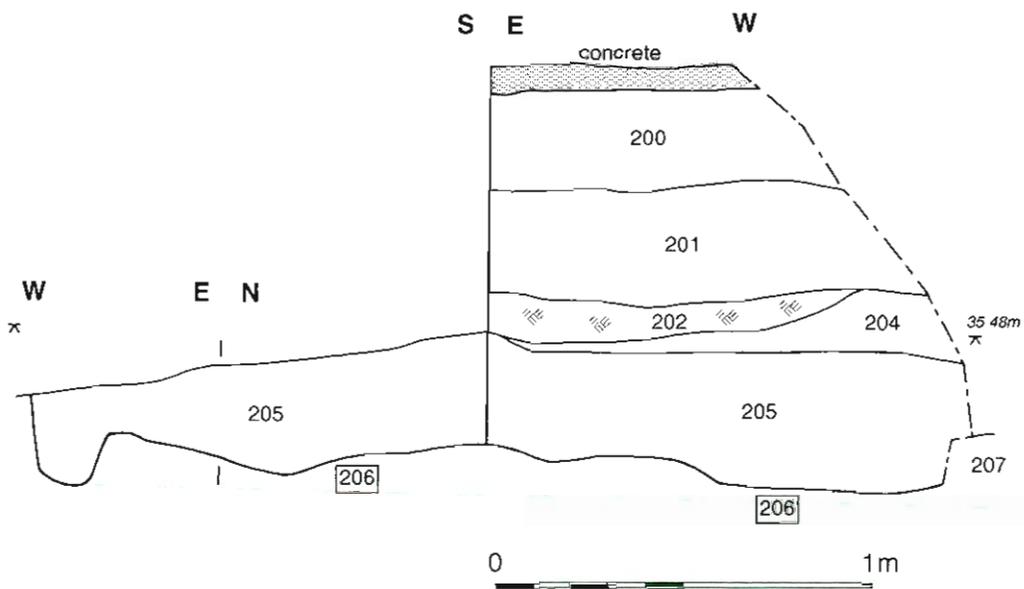


Fig.9 Trench 2 section, scale 1:20



Plate 1  
Trench 1, looking north



Plate 2  
Trench 1, looking west at wall 102



Plate 3  
Trench 1, looking south

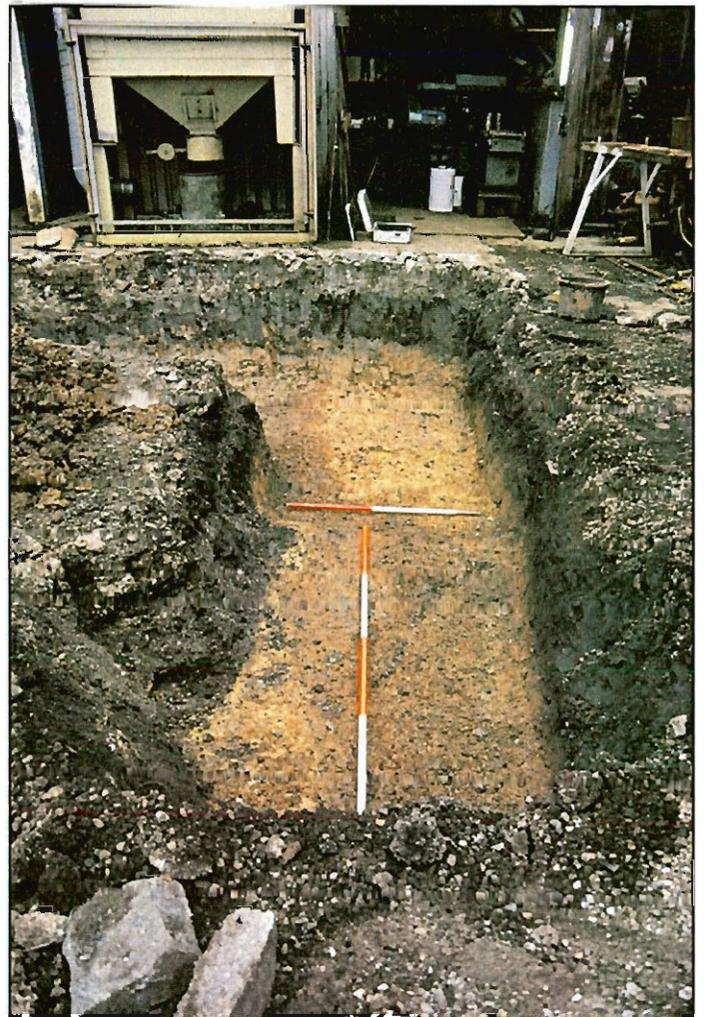


Plate 4  
Trench 2, looking west



Plate 5 Trench 2, looking east



Plate 6 Trench 2, tree bowl 105 as excavated, looking east

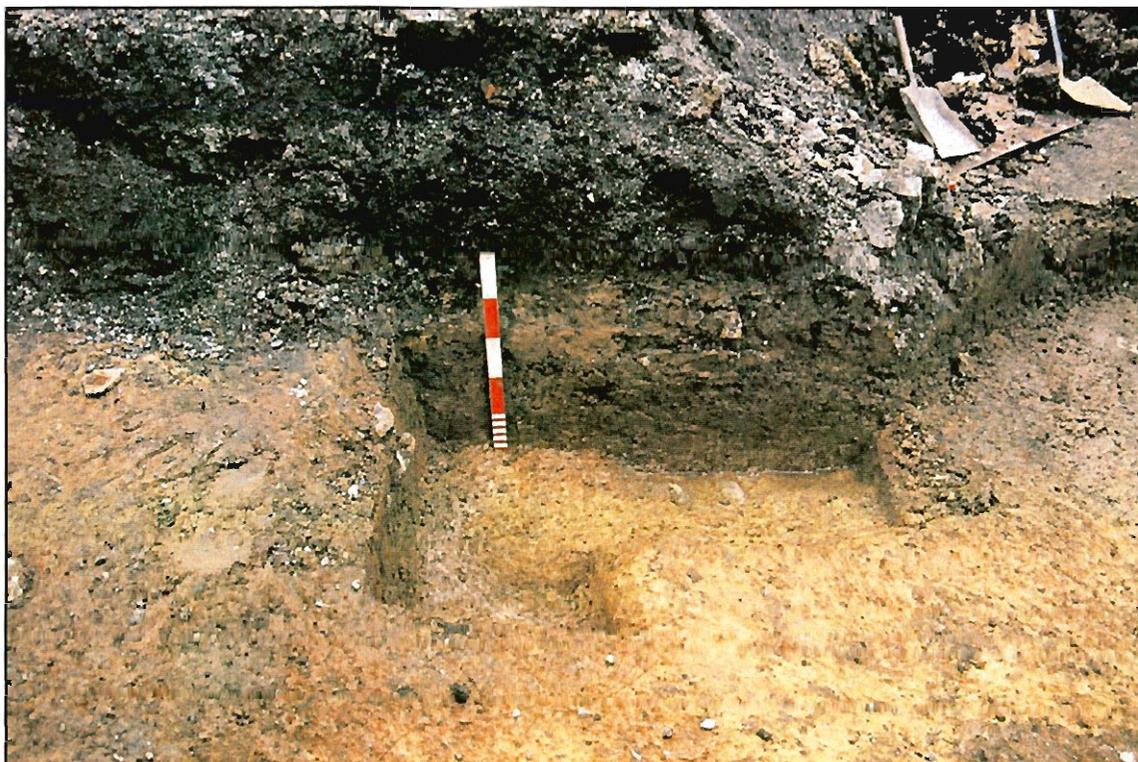


Plate 7 Trench 2, sondage 2, showing north-facing section, looking south



Plate 8 Trench 2, showing north-facing section, looking south

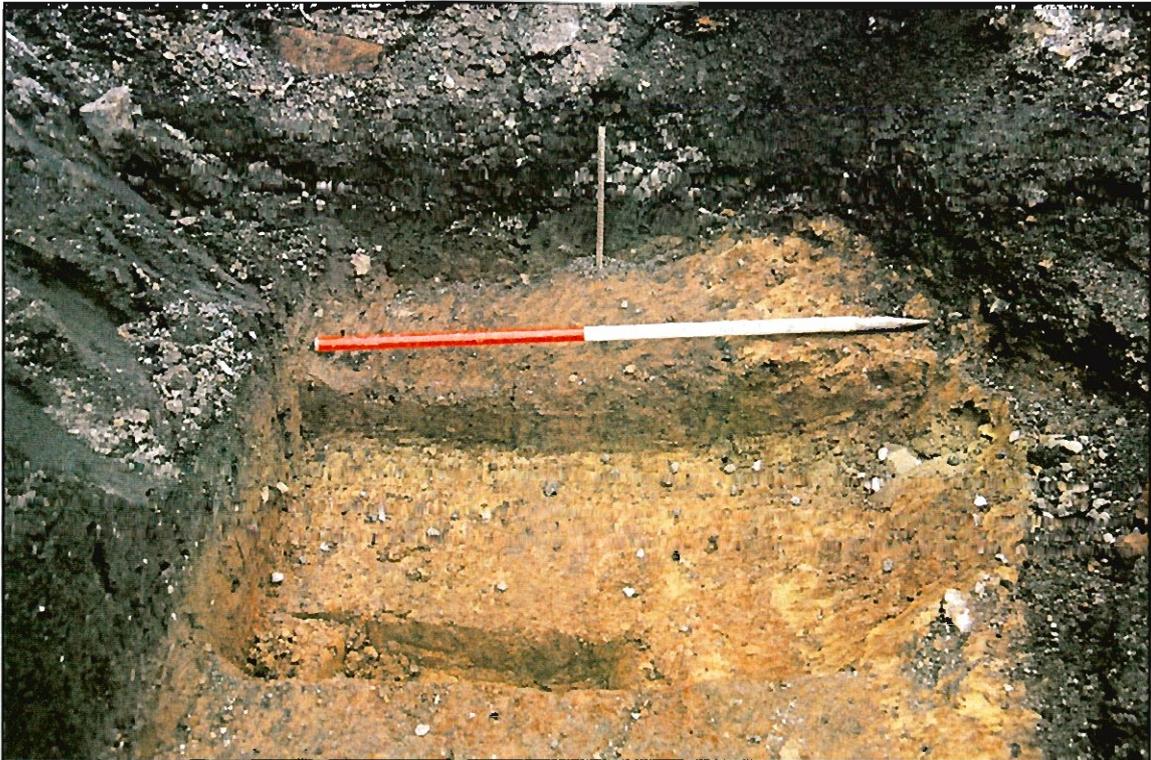


Plate 9 Trench 2, sondage 1, looking east



Plate 10 Trench 2, sondage 3, looking east



Plate 11  
Trench 2, sondage 2, looking east

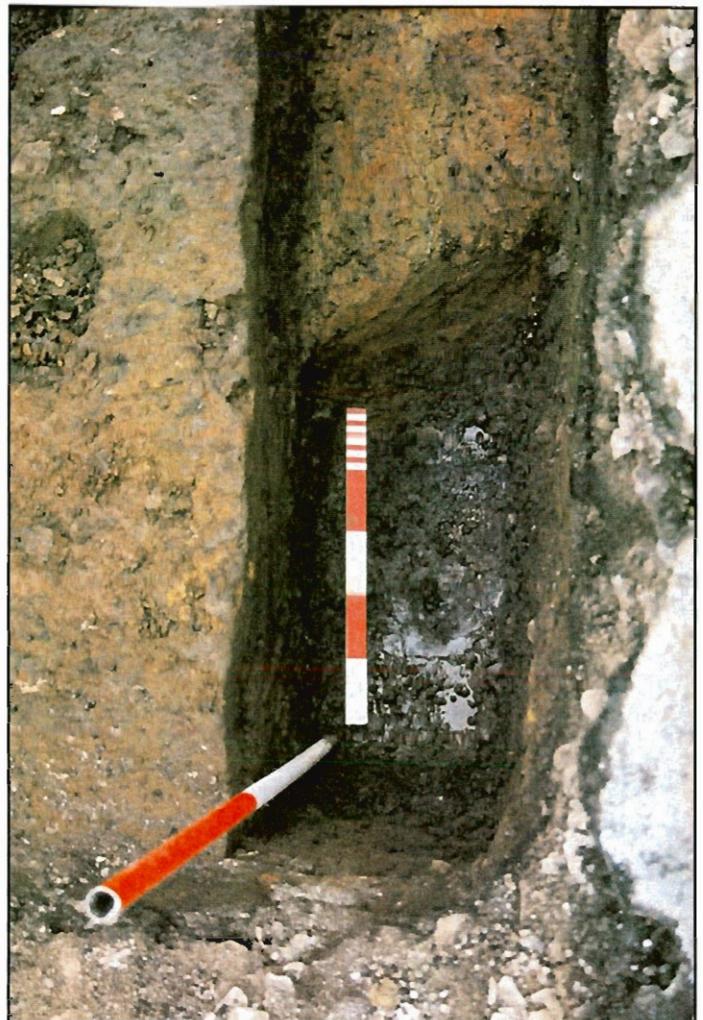


Plate 12  
Trench 1, sondage prior to removal of 113,  
looking south



Plate 13 Trench 1, sondage excavated to natural, looking east

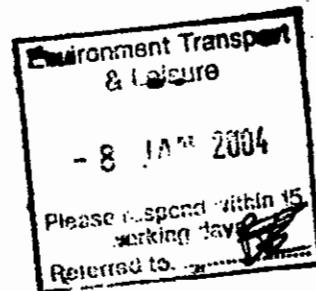


**Mark Snook, MA MRTPI**  
Chartered Town Planner & Architectural Consultant

Our ref:- 060104/099

6<sup>th</sup> January 2004

M A Tait  
Planning Department  
Bristol City Council  
Brunel House  
St George's Road  
Bristol  
BS1 5UY



Dear Mr Tait

**Ref: Site 25 -43 Pilemarsh, St George.**

Please find enclosed a copy of the archaeological report for the above site as requested.

I trust this now enables your authority to grant our client outline consent.

If you have any further questions or require any additional information then please do not hesitate to contact me in the office.

Yours sincerely

James Dexter