PN. 1132

KING STREET, DERBY ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION

2003

Project No. 1132

KING STREET, DERBY

ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION 2003

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1.0: SUMMARY

Birmingham Archaeology were commissioned by Birchover Properties (through Faithful and Gould Consultants) to undertake an archaeological evaluation of land at King Street, Derby (centred on NGR SK 352367). The evaluation followed an archaeological desk-based assessment which also included other, adjoining areas. The assessment identified the bounds of the adjoining church of St Alkmund, its associated graveyard, and highlighted the potential of the area evaluated to contain evidence of features associated with the medieval Bridge Gate frontage, and associated back-plot activity to the rear, although it was suspected that some areas may have been recently reduced in level. The later development of the area, including brick-built terraces of 18-19th century date was also described. The area evaluated latterly included car showroom premises, now demolished.

The archaeological evaluation was undertaken within the extreme eastern part of the area of the desk-based assessment. Two undated possible post-holes were identified, together with extensive evidence of levelling-up of the ground surface, and at least one brick-built structure.

2.0: INTRODUCTION

This report describes the results of an archaeological evaluation of land to the north of King Street, and to the south of St Alkmund's Way, in Derby (hereafter 'the site': centred on NGR SK 352367, Figs 1-2). The evaluation was undertaken by Birmingham Archaeology on behalf of Birchover Properties through Faithful and Gould Consultants. The archaeological evaluation followed an earlier desk-based assessment (Conway 2002), which also included other land, excluded from the scope of trial-trenching.

The work conforms with a specification prepared by Birmingham Archaeology (Birmingham Archaeology 2003), which was approved by Derbyshire County Council on behalf of Derby City Council. The evaluation was undertaken in accordance with the requirements of Planning Policy Guidance Note 16 (PPG16, Department of the Environment, November 1990), and the Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Field Evaluations (IFA, 1994, revised 1999).

At the time of the evaluation the site was an area of overgrown land.

The evaluation was undertaken in two stages. Stage 1 involved the excavation of three trenches, each measuring 10m by 1.6m, providing approximately a 4% sample by area of the proposed residential development. Because of the depth of overburden, Trench 1, close to the medieval Bridge Gate frontage was extended and re-machined in stage 2.

The purpose of the archaeological evaluation was to provide information concerning:
1) the former location of St Alkmund's church, and in particular, the eastwards extent of the associated churchyard.
2) the evidence for the medieval and post-medieval street frontages and the archaeological potential of the back-plot areas.

The archaeological background is described in the desk-based assessment (Conway 2002) and will not be repeated here.

Subject to the approval of the landowner it is intended to deposit the evaluation archive in the Derby Museum and Art Gallery.

3.0: METHODOLOGY

All trenches were originally intended to measure 10m by 1.6m. Trench 1 was aligned east-west. It was positioned to examine the northwestern portion of the site, to locate the terraces mapped in 1791, and to examine the area for evidence of earlier activity closer to the medieval Bridge Gate frontage. Trench 2 was located towards the centre of the site, to locate the north-south aligned streets mapped in 1791, and to test for evidence of earlier activity. Finally, Trench 3, located adjoining the King Street frontage in the south of the site was intended to test for evidence of the terrace and the possible ornamental square mapped in 1791, and of any earlier features. The evaluation was undertaken in two stages. In stage 1 three trenches were excavated, and in stage 2 Trench 1 was further widened to enable safe examination of the lower deposits.

A JCB excavator was used to remove the overburden down to the first significant archaeological horizon. All machining was undertaken under continuous archaeological control. In the event it was necessary to machine the upper levels of each trench with a machine equipped with a toothed bucket, because of the composition of the modern rubble. The trenches were extended to a maximum width of 4m, so that the trench sides could be stepped and/or battered at an angle of 45 degrees for safety, when working at depth.

Recording was by means of pre-printed pro-formas for contexts and features, supplemented by scale plans, sections, and monochrome and colour print photography.

4.0: RESULTS

4.1: Trench 1 (Fig. 3)

Trench 1 was aligned approximately east-west. It was dug in two stages. In stage 1 it was dug to a width of 5m, and was later enlarged to a width of 7m and a length of 12m in stage 2, to enable the trench sides to be stepped and battered for safety.

The natural subsoil, a yellow-orange clay-silt (1009) was located at a depth of 3m below the modern surface. This subsoil was tested in a machine-cut sondage which confirmed that it was not redeposited material. The surface of the subsoil was noted to dip slightly from west to east. The subsoil was cut by two post-holes (F103-4, S.2-3), dug 6m apart. Neither post-hole was fully exposed within the trench. The post-holes were roughly U-shaped in profile, measuring an average of 0.3m in both depth and diameter. Features F103 and F104 were backfilled with grey-brown sand-silt (1006 and 1007, respectively). The subsoil surface and the backfilled post-holes was sealed by a layer of black-grey clay-silt (1002), measuring up to 2.4m in depth. This deposit contained fragments of brick and broken stone fragments, together with occasional pockets of gravel. Cut through layer 1002 was a brick structure, comprising an outside wall (F100) and an associated brick floor (F101). Wall F100 was probably aligned roughly north-south, and survived to a maximum of eight courses above the contemporary floor level. A further fragmentary, partially-demolished north-south aligned brick wall (F102) surviving to a height of three courses was located in the west of the trench, overlying deposit 1002. The demolished remains of brick features F100-F102 and layer 1002 were sealed by a demolition deposit (1001) measuring up to 1.7m in depth. It contained large quantities of brick and concrete rubble, twisted concrete reinforcement, and broken fragments of architectural stone, possibly derived from the demolition of the adjoining church. This layer was sealed by gravel hardcore (1000) which formed the existing surface over the entire area evaluated.

4.2: Trench 2 (Fig. 3)

Trench 2 was aligned approximately northwest-southeast and measured a maximum of 9m by 4m. It was first excavated to a maximum depth of 2m along the whole length of the trench, exposing a concrete surface (2003). Subsequently, a 3m-wide slot was further excavated by machine in attempt to locate the natural subsoil. For safety reasons the machine-dug slot could not be hand-cleaned. The brown-yellow sand-clay natural subsoil (2005) was recorded at a depth of 4m below the modern surface. Above was a deposit of black-grey clay (2004), measuring 1.6m in depth, containing brick rubble and two fragments of animal bone. This deposit was in turn sealed by a concrete surface (2003). Above were layers of brick rubble in brown soil (2002), recorded below the modern hardcore surface (2000) of the trench. No features, or possible features of archaeological interest could be identified within the trench.

4.3: Trench 3 (Fig. 3)

Trench 3 was aligned approximately east-west. It measured 11m by 4m. It was first excavated to a depth of 1.5m below the modern surface over the whole length of the trench. Subsequently, a 3m-wide machine-dug slot was further excavated in an attempt to locate the natural subsoil. For safety reasons the machine-dug slot could not be hand-cleaned. The natural subsoil (3007), a yellow sand was located at a depth of 4.60m below the modern surface. It was sealed by a deposit of mixed yellow-brown clay-sand (3006) possibly redeposited natural subsoil. Above was a layer of dark grey-black sand-silt (3005), measuring 1.4m in depth, overlain by a brick wall (F300/3004) which survived to

a height of two courses. The wall was overlain by a layer of demolition rubble (3003), comprising brown soil containing fragments of concrete surfacing. Above was a layer of red clay (3002), sealed by a deposit of brick rubble and soil (3001), overlain by a hardcore surface (3000). No features, or possible features of archaeological interest could be identified, with the exception of wall F300/3004.

No datable pottery was collected from the trenches, with the exception of 19th century or later ceramics which derived from recent demolition deposits.

5.0: DISCUSSION

The earliest, albeit undated activity was represented by post-holes F103-4, which were backfilled with similar material, and could have been contemporary. These features could define part of a timber outbuilding or fence, lying within the backplot area to the rear of the Bridge Gate frontage. These features were sealed by a deep build-up deposit (1002), also recognised in Trench 2 (2004) and Trench 3 (3005), suggesting extensive clearance and levelling-up of the site. This landscaping could have been preparatory to the layout of buildings shown on the plan of 1791. If this interpretation is correct, it may be suggested that the post-holes were of 18th century or earlier date. Brick features F100-1 in Trench 1 may belong to the north-south terrace shown on the map of 1791, while brick wall F102 may be of 19th or 20th century date. The layer of disturbed subsoil (3006) in Trench 3 may relate to some form of activity, but is presently undatable.

No evidence of human bone was found, either *in situ* or *ex situ*.

The combined depth of deposits overlying the subsoil increased towards the south of the site (Trench 1, 3m; Trench 2, 4m; Trench 3, 4.6m), which may suggest the creation of a terrace to counteract a natural slope from north to south. The surface of the subsoil was also observed to dip slightly to the east within Trench 1, possibly following the natural contour in this direction. In contrast to the desk-based assessment (Conway 2002) which suggested that ground levels could have been scoured-out by landscaping, the evaluation has indicated that extensive levelling-up has taken place. Accordingly, it is possible that earlier post-medieval and medieval features could survive within the area evaluated, and also possibly even within the remainder of the area examined by the desk-based assessment.

6.0: IMPLICATIONS AND PROPOSALS

The evaluation has demonstrated that some features of possible medieval/early post-medieval date have survived later development within the area evaluated. The evaluation results suggest that the later development of the site has involved levelling-up of the ground surface, which may mean that evidence of medieval or early post-medieval settlement may survive in places. A higher density of archaeological features may be reasonably anticipated closer to the Bridge Gate frontage, although this cannot be proven.

Should the foundation design of the proposed development, or associated landscaping affect the subsoil horizon where deposits of archaeological significance might be anticipated, a strategy for archaeological mitigation should be devised, involving archaeological excavation, archaeological salvage recording and/or a watching brief, together with an appropriate level of publication of the results. A detailed strategy for this archaeological mitigation would be devised by the Archaeological Adviser to the Local Planning Authority.

In the case of archaeological mitigation fieldwork being required before development groundworks can commence it will be important to ensure an appropriate time allowance is provided for the archaeological fieldwork before the general groundwork contractor takes possession of the site.

Given the considerable depth of overburden (up to 4.6m) it is important that considerations of health and safety are given a high priority when the detailed programme of archaeological mitigation is devised.

7.0: ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The evaluation was sponsored by Birchover Properties Limited through Faithful and Gould. It was monitored by Dr Andrew Myers of Derbyshire County Council for Derby City Council. The fieldwork was supervised by Kate Bain, with assistance from Sally Radford. The illustrations were prepared by Nigel Dodds. The project was managed by Alex Jones who edited this report.

8.0: REFERENCES

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Conway, M 2002 *The Former St Alkmund's Church Site, King Street, Derby, An Archaeological Desk-Based Assessment 2002*. BUFAU Report No. 988

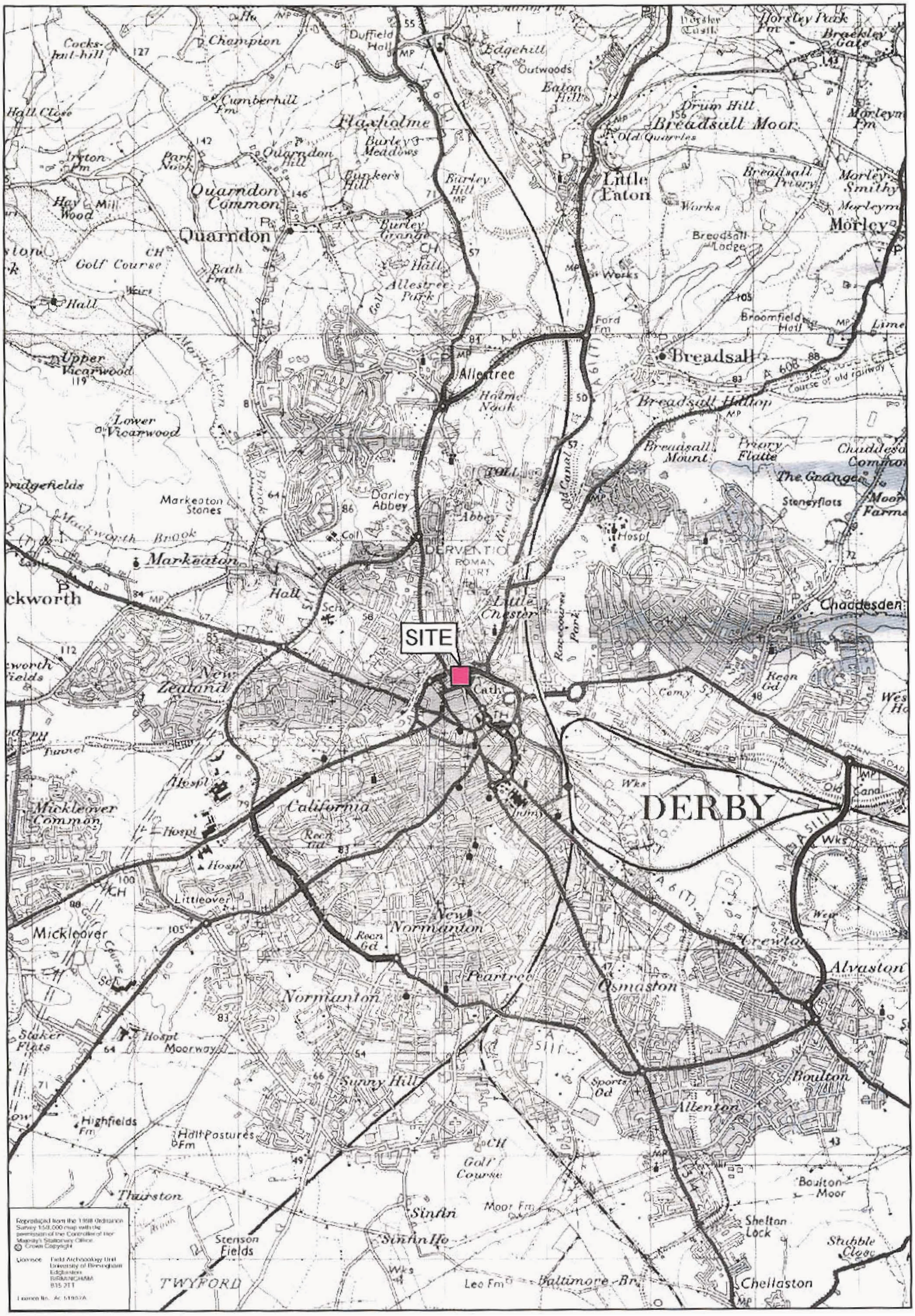
SITE
DERBY
Champion
Duffield Hall
Edgehill
Outwoods
Eaton Hill
Horsley Park Fm
Breakley Gate
Cumberhill Fm
Flaxholme
Drum Hill
Breadsall Moor
Old Quarries
Morley Fm
Hall Close
Burley Meadows
Quarndon Hill
Park Nook
Bunkers Hill
Burley Hill
Little Eaton
Breadsall Priory
Morley Smithy
Quarndon Common
Quarndon
Works
Burley Grange
Breadsall Lodge
Morley
Golf Course
Bath Fm
Hall
Allestree Park
Broomfield Hall
Ford Fm
Breadsall
Upper Vicarwood
Allestree
Holme Nook
Course of old railway
Breadsall Hilltop
Lower Vicarwood
Breadsall Mount
Priory Flatte
Chaddesden Common
The Grange
Markeaton Stones
Darley Abbey
Abbey
Stoneyflats
Moor Farms
Hospl
Mackworth Brook
Markeaton
Old Canal
DERVENTIO ROMAN FORT
Hall
Little Chester
Racecourse Park
Chaddesden
New Zealand
Cath
Recn Gd
Camp
Wks
California
Mickleover Common
Hospl
Littleover
Mickleover
New Normanton
Recn Gd
Crewton
Alvaston
Peartree
Normanton
Osmaston
Staker Flats
Hospl
Moorway
Sunny Hill
Sports Gd
Boulton
Allenton
Highfields Fm
Half Postures Fm
Golf Course
Thurston
Sinfin
Moor Fm
Boulton Moor
Shelton Lock
Stenson Fields
Sinfin Ho
Stubble Close
TWYFORD
Leo Fm
Baltimore Br.
Chellaston

Fig.1

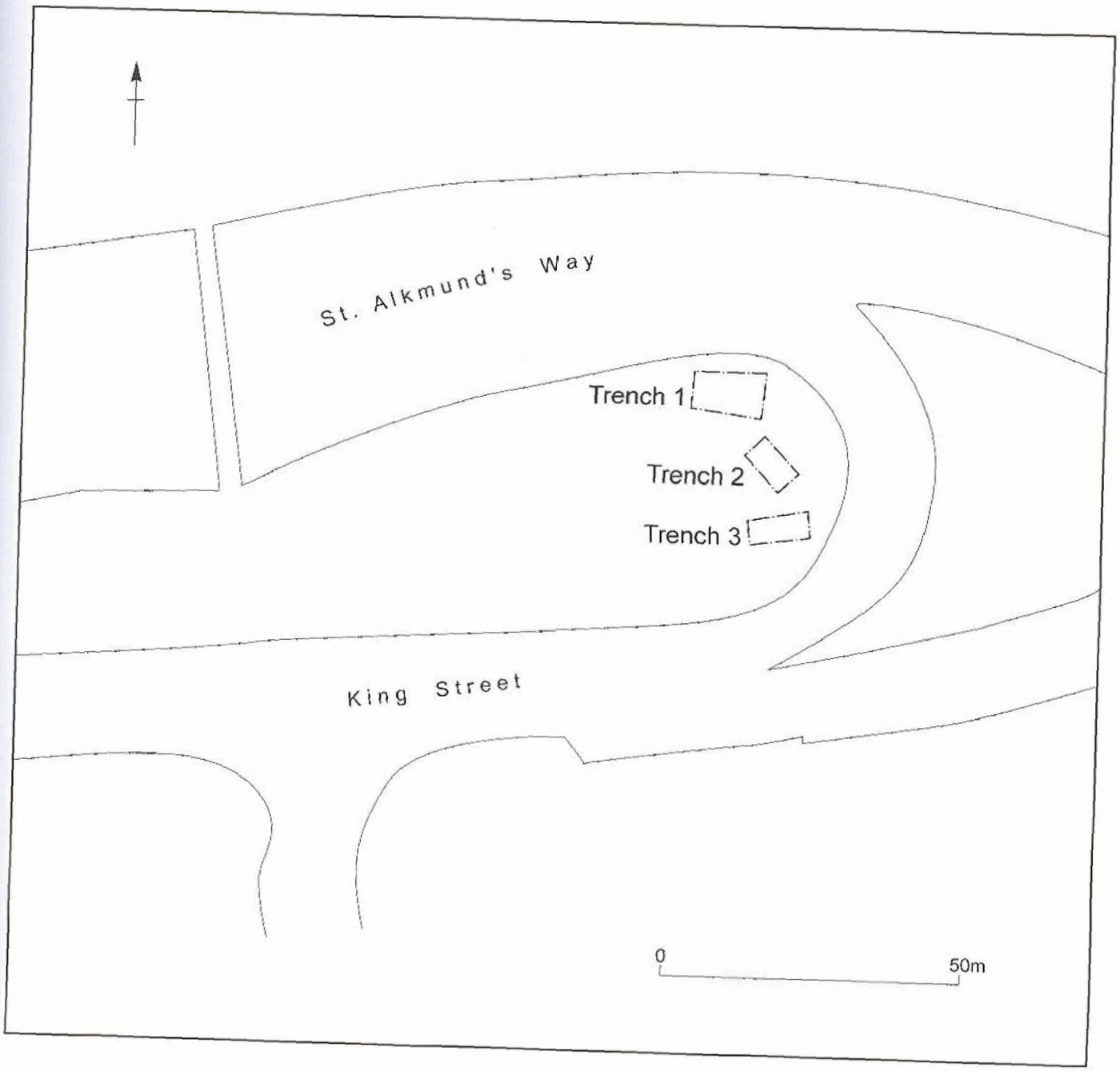

Fig.2

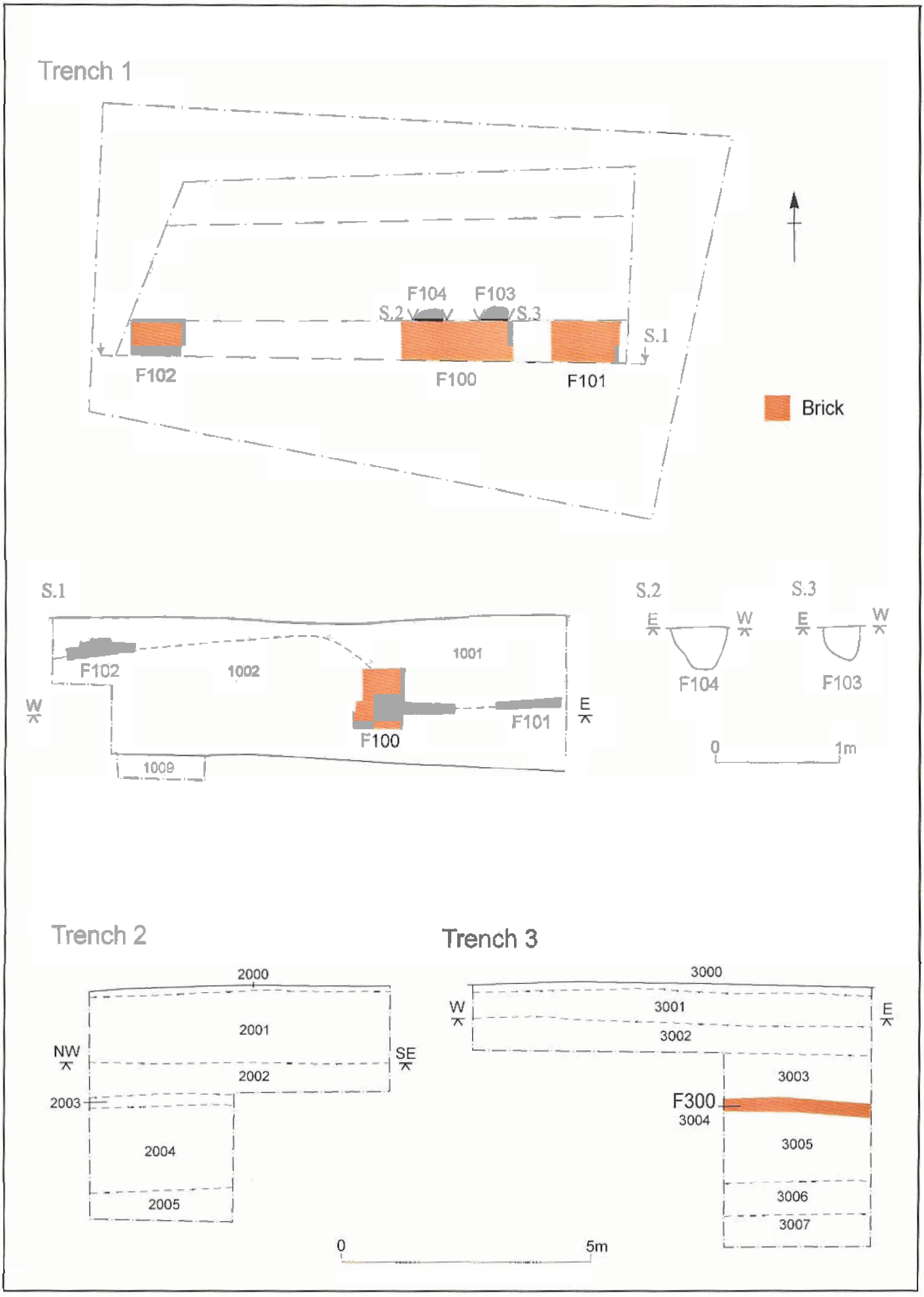
Trench 1
F104
F103
S.2
S.3
S.1
F102
F100
F101
Brick
S.1
F102
1002
1001
F100
F101
W
E
1009
S.2
S.3
E
W
F104
F103
0
1m
Trench 2
2000
2001
NW
SE
2002
2003
2004
2005
Trench 3
3000
W
E
3001
3002
3003
F300
3004
3005
3006
3007
0
5m

Fig.3