

**Archaeological Evaluation  
on land between  
19-21 Cobden Street  
Dresden  
Stoke-on-Trent  
Staffordshire  
NGR SJ 90892 42314**

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## **Non-technical summary**

*This report details the historical context, working methods and results of an archaeological evaluation undertaken in July 2013 by Cramp Sutherland Archaeological Services in advance of a proposed residential development on vacant land between 19-21 Cobden Street, Dresden, Stoke-on-Trent, Staffordshire (NGR SJ 90892 42314).*

*A single machine excavated trench targeted the below-ground remains of an end-terrace brick cottage, built by a freehold land society in the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century and demolished in the 1970s. Structural evidence, encountered at relatively shallow depths, denoted room divisions, a cellar, an out-building in the back yard and the outside privy. The artefact assemblage was unrepresentative of a domestic household and could not be used to assess economic and social activities. The pottery was mostly mid-19<sup>th</sup> century factory production waste and small finds were almost entirely absent.*

## **1.0 Introduction**

**1.1** Full planning consent for a bespoke detached dwelling-house on brownfield land situated between numbers 19 and 21 Cobden Street, Dresden, Stoke-on-Trent, was granted by the Local Planning Authority (LPA), Stoke-on-Trent City Council, on 17<sup>th</sup> September 2012 (ref. SOT/53905). This was an amended submission of a previous application (ref. SOT/52471).

**1.2** The proposed development area (PDA) was formerly occupied by 19<sup>th</sup>-century housing and in order to mitigate the impact of the development on a potentially significant heritage asset, a condition for an archaeological evaluation (see **5.1.1**) was advised by the LPA's Planning Archaeologist (PA) (Goodwin 2012). The request conformed with Stoke-on-Trent Strategic Plan Policy NC14: *Sites of archaeological importance*, and statutory government legislation established in the *National Planning Policy Framework: Section 12 (Conserving and enhancing the historic environment)*.

**1.3** Cramp Sutherland Archaeological Services (CSARC) was appointed by the developer, Mr S. Hussain, to undertake the evaluation.

## **2.0 Site location & character**

**2.1** Dresden is a 'resolutely middle class' residential suburb (Dresden CAA 2008, 6) on the outskirts of Longton, the southernmost of the six contiguous towns that comprise the modern city of Stoke-on-Trent. The PDA is located approximately 1.3 km south of Longton town centre, at NGR SJ 90892 42314. The A5035 road between Longton and Trentham runs north east to south west c. 125m north west of the site (FIG 1).

**2.2** The PDA is sub-rectangular and comprised 153m<sup>2</sup> (17.0m NE-SW x 9.0m NW-SE) of open, flat waste laid to grass and lying at an average elevation of 149m AOD (Above Ordnance Datum) (FIG 2). It is bounded to the south west by Cobden Street and to the north west by a brick wall. On the south east side is a public footpath, with residential housing beyond. To the north east is a fence, beyond which the land level drops c. 2.60m to a car park.

## **3.0 Geology**

**3.1** The Dresden area is characterised by superficial drifts of Devensian glacial till (boulder clay) containing a sedimentary outwash of sand and gravel deposited during the last glaciation c. 20000-11000 years BP. The underlying solid geology comprises sedimentary mudstone, sandstone and conglomerate clays of the Carboniferous Etruria Formation (British Geological Survey).

## **4.0 Archaeological and historical background**

**4.1** There are no entries in the Stoke-on-Trent Historic Environment Record relating to archaeological finds or deposits within the PDA and no previous archaeological investigation has been undertaken within its defined parameters.

**4.2** The site lies 55m outside the Dresden Conservation Area, which contains 19<sup>th</sup>-century properties that retain their original character and appearance (Dresden CAA 2008, 9). The conservation area includes a civic open space, Queen's Park, which is designated Grade II\* on the national historic parks register (English Heritage).

### **4.3** *Site history*

**4.3.1** Historically, the PDA was situated in the rural hamlet of Spratslade, a handful of cottages forming part of the township of Blurton, in the parish of Trentham (White 1834, 691). Yates' county map of 1775 (FIG 3) depicts the general vicinity of the PDA as an undeveloped landscape. Fulton's more detailed map of Blurton in 1815 (FIG 4) shows a regular pattern of agricultural fields and closes, from which it can be ascertained that the PDA is located in a two acre plot called *Near Footway Field* (London Gazette 1867, 15). The land belonged to Spratslade Farm, held by Sir John Fenton Fletcher Boughey, a wealthy coal owner and MP for Newcastle-under-Lyme.

**4.3.2** Longton expanded significantly during the first half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, developing as a centre of bone china production (Banks 1997, 5). Encroaching on its agricultural hinterland, it is likely that the value of Spratslade Farm became less than the money that could be made by the landowner from selling it. In July 1850 nine fields of 30 acres were bought by the Longton Freehold Land Society in order to create the suburb of Dresden (see **8.0**). A ground plan produced in February 1851 divided the proposed district into 190 geometric plots (Dobraszczyk 2001, 4), with the PDA corresponding to plot 97 (FIG 5). Most of its eleven streets were named after contemporary Liberal reformers, with Cobden Street honouring Richard Cobden, MP for Stockport and founder of the Anti-Corn Law League.

**4.3.3** Development of the new estate is underway by 1854 (Palliser 1976, 229) and the 1861 census records 41 inhabited and six 'unoccupied' houses, amounting to 53% of the total of 89 dwellings that eventually made up Cobden Street. The 1871 census lists 83 properties, 93% of the final number. Although number 15's existence cannot be confirmed as address numbers were not assigned in these two censuses, the plot was probably developed by 1861 or, at the latest, 1871. The earliest evidence for the property is the 1878 First Edition Ordnance Survey (OS) map and, like most of Dresden's terraces, was probably still extant in the 1970s (Palliser 1976, 229).

#### **4.4** *Site development*

**4.4.1** The 1878 OS map (1:500 scale) shows the original freehold plot measures c. 44m NE-SW x 13m NW-SE (572 m<sup>2</sup>). It is divided in half to allow space for three terrace-style dwellings at its north-east end fronting Villiers Street and three at the south-west end, corresponding to numbers 15, 17 and 19 Cobden Street (running from NW – SE) (FIG 6).

**4.4.2** The map records the overall external dimensions of the target dwelling as c. 7.50m NE-SW x 4.0m NW-SE. A walled forecourt sets the line of the building back c. 2.80m from the pavement, while the enclosed back yard measures c. 5.0m NE-SW x 4.0m NW-SE and contains two conjoined buildings. The external measurements of the larger structure, separated from the house by a c. 1.0m-wide gap, are c. 3.50m NE-SW x 2.0m NW-SE. A smaller annexe, indicative of a 'privy' (toilet), is c. 1.50m NE-SW x 1.50m NW-SE.

**4.4.3** While there are no observable changes to the dwelling on the 1900 OS map (1:2500 scale) (FIG 7), the out-buildings now form a single rectangular block, albeit still detached from the cottage. There are no overt alterations on the 1924 map (not illustrated) or in 1937 (FIG 8). The 1954 edition (FIG 9) shows the out-building connected to the cottage, creating a linear range extending the full length of the yard, narrowing at its north-east end. The property is unaltered on the 1971 OS map (not illustrated), but it is gone from the 1982 edition (1:1250 scale) (FIG 10) and the street is being redeveloped.

## **5.0 Methodology**

### **5.1** *Aims & objectives*

**5.1.1** An archaeological trial trench evaluation is defined by the Institute for Archaeologists' *Standard and guidance for field evaluation* as a limited programme of intrusive fieldwork to determine the presence or absence of the archaeological resource within a specified area in order to assess its character, extent, quality and condition and formulate appropriate strategies for its management (IfA 2008).

**5.1.2** The project was undertaken on three consecutive days between the 29<sup>th</sup> and 31<sup>st</sup> July 2013, in accordance with a detailed design brief from the PA (Goodwin 2012) supplemented by an approved Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) produced by CSARC (Cramp 2013). Site procedures adhered to current best archaeological practice and the relevant national codes of professional conduct advocated in the by-laws of the *Institute for Archaeologists* (IfA 2012).

**5.1.3** The confined nature of the site restricted the evaluation to a single trial trench no larger than 15.0m NE-SW x 2.0m NW-SE (30m<sup>2</sup>), which would allow a 19.6% basal area to be archaeologically sampled. The trench location was determined from the historical map evidence and targeted the end property, number 15 Cobden Street. The primary objectives of the investigation are described in detail in the PA's brief (Goodwin 2012, 3-4), but can be broadly summarized as:

- confirming the presence/absence of any remains of archaeological interest,
- ascertaining the chronology, nature, phasing and state of preservation and relationships of any archaeological deposits and features,
- preserving by record the archaeological evidence found,
- assessing the character and relative importance of the site within a local, regional and national context.

## **5.2** *Method statement*

**5.2.1** A 180° backhoe excavator equipped with a 1.80m-wide toothless ditching bucket and operating under archaeological supervision was used during this project to remove topsoil and overburden in gradual spits down to the first discernible archaeological horizon, which was then cleaned by hand in order to clarify features and deposits. If no archaeological features or deposits were encountered, machining is continued either to a point where undisturbed natural subsoil was identified, or to a safe and practical working depth.

**5.2.2** The archaeology was recorded by means of written site notes, CSARC's *pro-forma* context sheets and appropriately scaled drawings (1:20 for plans, 1:10 for sections). A single context recording system was utilised for stratigraphic sequences, with unique context numbers allocated sequentially, beginning at

**100.** In this report the contexts are represented in bold, with archaeological fills, layers and features shown in parentheses, i.e. **(100)**, and cuts in square brackets, i.e. [**129**].

**5.2.3** A photographic record with appropriate scales, depicting specific stages of fieldwork and the layout and relationship of archaeological features, is also maintained. For this project, high resolution colour digital images were taken on a GE HZ1500 camera (16.0MPX) and 35mm monochrome prints with a Nikon FM manual SLR.

**5.2.4** A meaningful proportion of contextual finds are retained for analysis, consistent with approved practice outlined in the *Standard and guidance for the collection, documentation, conservation and research of archaeological materials* (IfA 2008).

**5.2.5** A temporary benchmark (TBM) with a given value of 100m AOD was established on the south-west corner of number 21 Cobden Street (FIG 2). All site levels relate to this value.

**5.2.6** Monitoring of the project was maintained by the PA as the curatorial authority. After it had been recorded, the trench was backfilled and compacted.

**5.2.7** In accordance with the IfA's *Standard and guidelines for the creation and deposition of archaeological archives* (IfA 2009), CSARC will deposit an ordered archive of data collated during the project for long-term storage at The Potteries Museum & Art Gallery, Bethesda Street, Hanley, Stoke-on-Trent (site code: **CSD 13**, accession number: **2013.LH.17**).

## **6.0 Results**

**6.1** *Description of the evaluation* (PL 1; FIG 11)

**6.1.1** Using cartographic evidence, the trench targeted one of the three houses identified within the PDA, together with its out-buildings and back yard. The completed trench measured 14.20m NE-SW x 1.80m NW-SE, giving a total excavation area of 25.56m<sup>2</sup> and yielded a 16.7% sample of the site.

**6.1.2** The thin topsoil horizon (**100**) comprised a loose dark brown, silty clay loam up to c. 0.10m thick, with occasional inclusions of residual pottery production waste and modern refuse, which were not retained. Beneath (**100**) in the north-west corner of the PDA, a 0.25m-thick layer of loose processed gravel (**104**) was encountered. Although there was no sign of a cut, the gravel was construed as fill for a modern utilities trench not detected during scanning with a Cable Avoidance Tool or shown on existing services plans. The northern end of the trench was, however, realigned c. 0.50m south east to avoid it.

**6.1.3** Underlying (**100**) at the north-east end of the trench was a red/black layer of angular gravel, burnt shale and ash c. 0.20m thick (**101**), which had been disturbed by (**104**). At the south-east end of the trench, this aggregate material was c. 0.05m-0.10m thick and probably represents post-demolition levelling. Beneath (**101**) toward the centre of the trench was a layer of brown/yellow sandy clay (**145**) c. 0.10m thick, subsequently revealed as re-deposited natural sealing the cellar backfill (see below **6.2.4**). The natural sub-soil, a firm yellow, sandy clay (**132**), was encountered at a minimum depth of c. 0.15m below ground level.

## **6.2** *The cottage*

**6.2.1** Removing made ground (**101**) revealed the external main walls of the cottage, designated (**134**) at the front (south west) and (**131**) to the rear (north east). Between (**134**) and (**131**) cross wall (**140**) divided the property into two unequally sized units, designated as Room A to the front and Room B at the rear. Room A was the largest, interpreted as the main living area, while Room B was very narrow and was perhaps a kitchen or service room. None of the floor surfaces had survived in either room and only one diagnostic feature was encountered.

**6.2.2** Wall (**134**) (1.55m NW-SE x 0.22m NE-SW as revealed) was double-skinned, consisting of hand-made un-frogged red brick jointed with lime mortar. It comprised five courses (0.43m high), but the bond pattern of the facing bricks could not be discerned. The lowest course, a single stepped footing 0.32m wide, was laid on the clay natural (**132**). A 0.10m-wide gap toward the wall's south-

east end implied the former presence of a gas or water pipe. Higher elements of (134) were visible in the longitudinal site boundary wall, extending at least thirteen courses (c. 1.10m) above ground level (PL 2).

**6.2.3** Wall (131) (1.51m NW-SE x 0.22m NE-SW as revealed) was double-skinned, consisting of hand-made un-frogged red brick jointed with lime mortar and comprised three courses of brickwork; again the bond could not be resolved. Cross wall (140) (c. 1.35m NW-SE x 0.34m as revealed) was double-skinned and of identical construction to the external walls. A single-skin red brick longitudinal party wall (122) (4.55m NE-SW x 0.10m NW-SE as revealed) defined the south-east side of the dwelling.

**6.2.4** The only diagnostic feature (133) within the downstairs rooms was located in the north-east corner of Room A. It comprised one course of bricks laid flat in an L-shape, measuring 1.80m NE-SW x 0.90m NW-SE and tied into party wall (122). A line of bricks probably from a similar feature was partially uncovered south east of (122) and suggested the adjacent property was a mirror image of number 15. (133) was interpreted as footings for a staircase, but also denoted the entrance to a cellar located below Room B. At the north-east end of (133) was a threshold of common bricks laid flat (0.26m NE-SW x 0.80m NW-SE). Butting against the north-east side of the threshold was a set of steps (141) (PL 3). The top two steps only were exposed, but both consisted of blue engineering bricks laid on edge. The tread of each step was 0.90m wide by 0.24m deep, with the vertical risers being 0.26m.

### **6.3** *The cellar*

**6.3.1** Removing re-deposited layer (145) between walls (140) and (131) exposed a c. 1.85m-thick deposit of brick rubble (142). Although the underlying cellar was not completely emptied, enough material was removed by machine to determine that it was defined by the same walls as Room B, i.e. (140) to the south west, (131) in the north east and (122) to the south east. Extending along the top of wall (140) was a line of angled bricks, suggesting a springer course for the flattened arch of a barrel-vaulted ceiling.



**6.3.2** The cellar walls were painted with white limewash and the floor (**143**) was paved with blue engineering bricks laid flat (PL 4). In the north-west corner was a suspected cold-slab (**144**), although only its red brick base remained, c. 0.60m in height and c. 0.50m wide. Due to the depth and dubious stability of its sides, the cellar was not entered for safety reasons and measurements were calculated from the top of the trench.

#### **6.4** *The back yard*

**6.4.1** No evidence of a yard surface was encountered. Between back wall (**131**) and out-building wall (**125**) was a 0.90m-wide gap (PL 5), corresponding to the space depicted on the OS maps between 1878 and 1937. Butting against the north-east side of (**131**) was a compacted grey/white mortary layer (**130**) (1.50m NW-SE x 0.30m NE-SW as revealed) that may have been bedding (sub-base) for a brick paved yard surface. A linear cut [**129**] (1.50m NW-SE) through (**130**) contained a 0.16m-diameter earthenware drainpipe (**127**), underlying a 0.35m-wide sidefill of loose, grey silty clay (**128**) butting against wall (**125**). Only fragments of 19<sup>th</sup>-century biscuit-fired saggar were found in (**128**),

#### **6.5** *The out-building*

**6.5.1** The external dimensions of this NE – SW aligned structure were estimated as c. 3.40m NE-SW x 2.30m NW-SE. No evidence for walls linking the out-building with the cottage, as shown on the 1954 OS map, were encountered. Internally, the building comprised two rooms, designated as Rooms C and D (FIG 11). The former was the larger of the two and located closest to the dwelling, while the latter so small it was presumed to be little more than a shed.

**6.5.2** Room C was defined by a main transverse wall (**125**) to the south west, cross wall (**123**) to the north east and party wall (**122**) to the south east. Both (**125**) and (**123**) were double-skinned, of hand-made red brick jointed with lime mortar. Not enough brickwork survived to discern the bond. Room D was demarcated by wall (**123**) to the south west, (**122**) to the south east and to the north east by slapdash-looking wall (**113**) (0.90m NW-SE x 0.22m NE-SW as revealed) and a 0.40m length of the privy shaft (**115**) (see **6.6.5**).

- 6.5.3** Wall (125)(1.50m NW-SE x 0.22m NE-SW as revealed) (PL 5 & 6) survived as two courses of straight footings (0.16m high), with the lowest course laid on the natural (132). Overlying (132), abutting the north-east side of wall (125) and the south-west side of wall (123), was a packed down stratum of black ash and gravel 0.03m-thick (136). This layer, containing moderate inclusions of clinker and pottery spot-dated to the mid 19<sup>th</sup>-century (see 7.0), presumably represented imported levelling material. Overlying it was a 0.03m-thick layer of red/brown gritty clay (124) containing fragments of ceramic building material (CBM), mid 19<sup>th</sup>-century pottery waste and kiln furniture. It was unclear whether this represented a different layer of levelling material, perhaps sourced from a different location, or was the sub-base of a floor.
- 6.5.5** Butting against the northern side of wall (125), at its north-west end, were two courses of stepped brickwork (126) (0.72m NE-SW x 0.20m NW-SE) (FIG 11). This unidentified feature extended into the south-east-facing section and its north-east end presumably truncated by the suspected services trench represented by (104). The bricks on its lower, south-east side were laid flat on (136) (PL 5), implying that the partially overlying layer (124) post-dates the feature. The presence within (124) of kiln furniture dating not earlier than 1862 may imply a *terminus post quem* for the out-building, or at least its floor.
- 6.5.6** The south-west side of Room D was formed by wall (123) (1.40m NW-SE x 0.22m NE-SW). Its south-east end butted against party wall (122) while its north-west end had been disturbed by (104). The wall was laid on a layer of loose yellow/grey gritty clay (121) c. 0.08m thick, with inclusions of saggar and mid-19<sup>th</sup> century potsherds. It was of somewhat indifferent construction, with the brickwork toward its south-east end changing to being laid on edge. It seemed unlikely this wall possessed any structural integrity and may have simply served as a partition for the out-building's two rooms. The short length of wall (113), on the north-east side of the room, which also appeared to be of haphazard construction, was also set on layer (121), implying that it might be contemporary with wall (123).

**6.5.7** The south-east end of Room D was formed by party wall (**122**) (1.12m NE-SW x 0.24m NW-SE as revealed), which at this point increased to double-skin thickness and was observed to be seated on the gravelly ash layer (**136**).

## **6.6** *The privy*

**6.6.1** The second, smaller outside structure depicted on the 1878 map, was indeed a brick-built privy. It comprised two units, a deep vault or shaft, and a square ancillary structure, presumably the entry space in front (PL 7; FIG 12). Together they measured c. 1.40m NE-SW x 1.60m NW-SE (2.24m<sup>2</sup>). The rectangular shaft (**115**) (PL 8) had external dimensions of 1.37m NE-SW x 0.68m NW-SE and was constructed of machine-made blue engineering bricks laid to Stretcher bond. The bricks were frogged, i.e. they possessed an indentation on one side to assist in keying the mortar. They measured 1100mm x 230mm x 80mm and were stamped FENTON TILERIES.

**6.6.2** There was a straight join in the brickwork on the shaft's south-west side, indicating either poor construction or rebuilding, or perhaps both (PL 9). Party wall (**122**) probably butted against the southern end of (**115**), although this could not be confirmed due to the intervening presence of a modern gas monitoring well.

**6.6.3** Internally, the dimensions of the shaft were 1.13m NE-SW x 0.43m NW-SE with the side walls being a maximum of 0.72m in depth. It contained a 0.40m-deep fill of loose, dark brown ashy silt (**114**) with frequent inclusions of pottery and kiln furniture which is predominantly early to mid-19<sup>th</sup> century in date, as well as clinker, glass, saggar and a clay tobacco pipe stem. Within (**114**) was a NE – SW aligned brown salt-glazed ceramic socketed pipe (**112**), 0.13m in diameter and partially encased in a rough concrete coating, which was interpreted as the waste outlet for a water closet. The bricks within the fill under the pipe were identical to those from (**115**), perhaps from the north-east end of the shaft, which had been knocked through so as to insert pipe (**112**) (PL 10).

**6.6.4** Removing fill (**114**) revealed a brick base (**135**), one course (0.07m) thick, bedded on a 0.14m-thick layer of grey/black gritty silt (**137**) with moderate

inclusions of mid-19<sup>th</sup> century pottery. This layer also corresponded with a rectangular hole in the brickwork 0.30m wide by 0.14m high the at the north-east end of the shaft, which appeared to be a deliberate feature (PL 10). Underlying (137) were remains of what seemed to be an earlier base (138), comprising a stub of brickwork at the north-east end of the shaft, measuring 0.38m NW-SE x 0.26m NE-SW. It sloped down to the north east, implying that it may have allowed drainage through the gap. The side walls of the shaft appeared to be contemporary with this lower base, which was itself bedded on a layer of black silty clay mixed with fragments of saggar (139), which was at least 0.07m-thick and presumably overlay the natural geology, but this was not observed.

- 6.6.5** On the north-west side of (115) was an L-shaped double-skin brick feature comprising wall (116) (1.39m NE-SW x 0.98m NW-SE), aligned NE – SW, and (113), aligned NW – SE, which also formed the north east side of Room D (see 6.5.2). Although the brick was not mortared, wall (116) was two courses high (0.16m), with the lower course of brick mostly laid on edge.
- 6.6.6** Within the L-shaped feature was a fairly compact fill of grey/black silty ash (117), 0.16m thick, containing clinker, saggar and moderate amounts of pottery. This overlay another stratum of made ground (118), 0.23m thick, consisting of loose, grey/brown silty ash with frequent inclusions of saggar, clinker, pottery and kiln furniture including examples that do not date earlier than 1846. This lower fill (118) appeared to be a construction level for (116), and suggests that although the L-shaped feature probably represents the ‘walk-in’ part of the privy, walls (116) and (113) are not contemporary and that there may have been some remodelling of either the closet structure or the north-east end of the out-building.
- 6.6.7** To the north-east of (116) was a stretch of red brick wall (119) (0.63m NW-SE x 0.11m NE-SW), which had been disturbed by (104) at its north-west end. It butted against both (115) and (116) and presumably represented the back wall of the yard.

## **7.0 Finds analysis**

### **7.1.1** *Ceramics, by Jon Goodwin*

**7.1.2** A total of 165 ceramic vessel sherds (2,943g by weight), 52 kiln furniture and saggar fragments (3,372g) (this does not include the probable setter plates (see below **7.1.7**) which have been quantified with the vessel sherds) and one marble (4g) were recovered from seven contexts during excavations at Cobden Street, Dresden. The material was examined macroscopically and divided into fabric/ware types and vessel forms. Quantification was by means of sherd count and weight (in grams). A full list of the material from the site is provided in Appendix 2. Table 1 provides a sherd count of ware types by context and Table 2 provides a list of spot dates for contexts with ceramic material.

**7.1.3** The assemblage is dominated by ceramic waste products of the local industry; only two sherds, both stoneware vessels from (**114**) and (**137**), are conclusively non-Staffordshire wares. Two conjoining yellow ware bowl sherds from (**117**) could represent a south Derbyshire product, but could conceivably also have been manufactured in the Potteries. The firm of Clementson and Young of Broad Street, Shelton, was producing comparable wares in the mid 1840s (Henrywood 2002, 100; Boothroyd 2009, 48). The extent of yellow ware production in north Staffordshire, however, remains unknown.

**7.1.4** A similar range of forms populate each of the context groups, comprising a mixture of table and tea wares, accompanied by a handful of serving vessels and toilet wares. Undecorated, biscuit-fired whitewares appear most frequently (forming c. 21% of the total assemblage by sherd count) and appear in all context groups with the exception of (**121**). Of the decorated whitewares, printed specimens form the majority (23 examples, thirteen of which are biscuit fired) and are present in all contexts with the exception of (**121**). Familiar patterns such as 'Willow' and 'Sea Leaf' are identifiable.

**7.1.5** Slip-decorated earthenwares, typically hemispherical or carinated bowls with simple banded designs, represent c. 6% of the assemblage, with a total of fourteen sherds (ten of which are biscuit). Only two examples of whitewares with under-glaze painted decoration are present - a teapot cover and possible

sugar bowl handle from (137). A single sherd of an under-glaze sponge decorated whiteware (a flatware) was recovered from (114). Whitewares with moulded decoration are limited to two sherds from (114), representing a plate rim with floral design, and hollow ware with basketwork moulding. One whiteware with a pink glaze on the exterior of the vessel (but clear within) features in (137). Redwares, either plain or decorated with encrusted (114), slip (136) or lustre (137) decoration are present in small numbers, as are blue-bodied earthenwares (124) and (137) and Rockingham wares, two sherds of which, from (124) and (137), are biscuit.

Ware type	114	117	118	121	124	136	137	TOTAL
WW P (B)	11	2	18		4	8	2	45
WW P (G)	1		1				1	3
WW MD (B)	3							3
WW MD (G)	1							1
WW UGTP (B)	6		4		1	2		13
WW UGTP (G)	3	1					6	10
WW UGPD (G)							2	2
WW UGSLP (B)	4		3		1		2	10
WW UGSLP (G)	3						1	4
WW UGSP (G)	1							1
WW SETT (G)	1		2		1	2		6
BB EW MD (B)					2			2
BB EW P (G)							1	1
RW D (G)	1					3		4
RW (B)	1							1
RW MD (G)						2		2
RW MD (B)						1		1
RW OGL							1	1
CGW							1	1
BUFF E'WARE							1	1
BC P (B)	3	2	10	10	1	2		28
BC P (G)	1							1
BC MD (B)	2	2	4	2	1			11
BC MD (G)		1						1
BC SPRIG (G)	2							2
BC OGE (G)				1				1
BC OGE & L (G)						1		1
YW (G)		2						2
ROCK (B)					1		1	2
ROCK (G)	2			1				3
SW	1						1	2
KF - HM	5	1	3		1	4		14
KF - PRESSED	3		6		1	1		11
KF - EXTR STRIP	9	3	2			2		16
KF - EXTR SADD	1							1
KF - CRANK		2						2

SAGGAR	1	3	2					6
CLINKER		1				1		2
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>66</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>55</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>218</b>

**TABLE 1:** *Sherd count of ware types by context.*

Key to abbreviations: **WW** – whiteware; **BB EW** – blue-bodied earthenware; **RW** – redware; **CGW** – coloured-glaze ware; **BUFF E'WARE** – buff earthenware; **BC** – bone china; **YW** – yellow ware; **ROCK** – Rockingham ware; **SW** – stoneware; **(B)** – biscuit; **(G)** – glazed; **P** – plain; **MD** – moulded decoration; **UGTP** – under-glaze transfer printed; **UGPD** – under-glaze painted; **UGSLIP** – under-glaze slip decorated; **UGSP** – under-glaze sponge decorated; **OGL** – over-glaze lustre decoration; **OGE** – over-glaze enamel; **L** – lustre; **KF** – kiln furniture; **HM** – hand-made; **EXTR** – extruded; **SADD** – saddle; **SETT** – setter.

**7.1.6** Four biscuit-fired, undecorated sherds from **(118)** feature pencil markings and handwritten script ('8 inch') and have been employed as tallies – waste pieces used within the factory to tot-up production or order quantities (see Banks 1997, 40-1).

**7.1.7** With the exception of **(137)**, bone china is well represented in all contexts. Most examples are biscuit fired (of the 44 sherds present, 39 are in a biscuit state) and plain, although moulded decoration in the form of fluted or ribbed vessel bodies appears on eleven sherds. Many of the biscuit china vessels are badly warped or show signs of collapse during firing. Applied decoration features on just four bone china sherds: two saucer fragments with floral 'Chelsea' springs from **(114)**, a cup sherd from **(121)** with over-glaze enamel colours, and an over-glaze enamelled and lustre decorated cup from **(136)**.

**7.1.8** A total of eleven hand-made stilts were recovered from contexts **(114)**, **(117)**, **(118)**, **(124)** and **(136)**. Each comprises three extruded and knife-trimmed arms, cut or worked to a point at the distal end and pinched together at their proximal ends to form a trivet. Four groups which feature these stilts **(114)**, **(118)**, **(124)** and **(136)** also contain die-pressed examples, produced either by Charles Ford of Hanley to his patent of 1846 (Henrywood 2002, 127) or by Joseph Gimson and Co., manufacturers of kiln furniture at Market Street, Fenton, from at least 1862 (Henrywood 2002, 131). Six whiteware plate sherds

from (114), (118), (124) and (136) appear to have been used as setters, i.e. vessels utilised during glost firing to provide a stable base for a stack of spurred plates within a saggar (see Goodwin & Barker 2009, 57).

**7.1.9** Although there is some variation in the composition of each individual context group, there is a general consistency in the type of material found in each. All groups feature material that can be dated to the middle of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, with the widest probable date range for the assemblage being c. 1830 to c. 1870. A list of spot dates for each context is provided in Table 2.

Context	Probable date range	Notes
114	c. 1846+	Charles Ford pressed spurs, patented in 1846, provide a <i>terminus post quem</i> for the group. Additional appearance of hand-made stilts may indicate early, transitional period between the two types. Otherwise stylistic traits suggest wares of the mid 19 <sup>th</sup> century – the lack of any definite pearlware sherds indicates a c. 1830s+ date at the earliest.
117	c. 1830s+	Whitewares only within the group; no pressed stilts.
118	c. 1846+	As 114.
121	c. 1830s+	Earliest date for production of Rockingham wares, but bone china sherds similar to other groups from the site.
124	c. 1862+	Fragment of pressed stilt produced by Joseph Gimson & Co., active from at least 1862. The presence of a hand-made stilt is a little odd given the potentially later date.
136	mid 19 <sup>th</sup> century	Most stilts are hand-made, although one is pressed – may suggest a date of the mid 1840s+.
137	mid 19 <sup>th</sup> century	Stylistically similar to other context groups of same date, with the possible exception of one coloured-glaze whiteware sherd that could be intrusive.

**TABLE 2:** *Spot dates for contexts containing ceramic material.*

**7.1.10** The relative homogeneity of the Cobden Street sherds suggests that they were deposited on site over a short period, perhaps in an initial single landscaping/construction operation, possibly followed by later redeposition. If



the latter is true, then the integrity of the groups has remained largely intact. Sources of potential contamination would, presumably, have been limited to the household once the site was occupied and there is little conclusive evidence of any domestic ceramic waste within the assemblage. Although the non-local ceramics discussed in section 7.1.3 could have stemmed from a domestic source, they are of a sufficiently utilitarian and ubiquitous nature to have been used in most contexts, including the work-place. The ceramic marble from (137) perhaps presents itself as the best candidate for a domestic item, but this cannot be verified.

## **7.2** *Non-ceramic finds*

**7.2.1** The retained non-ceramic finds assemblage was almost non-existent. It was limited to an undecorated stem fragment from a fired clay tobacco pipe and one unidentified animal bone, both retrieved from privy fill (114). Neither was diagnostic and although the bone could be kitchen debris, it is more likely the items are residual intrusions, probably imported to site with the levelling material.

## **8.0** **Discussion**

### **8.1** *Freehold land societies*

**8.1.1** In the early 19<sup>th</sup>-century the right to vote was primarily determined by property ownership, resulting in a tiny electorate dominated by the aristocracy and major landowners. Freehold land societies were established by Liberal Party radicals who sought parliamentary reform of the electoral system. They proposed enfranchising their supporters (shopkeepers, artisans and the lower middle class) by exploiting a loophole in the 1832 Reform Act that assured suffrage to owners of freehold property with a minimum rental value of 40 shillings *per annum* (Jones 2010, 139).

**8.1.2** The freehold societies bought land, usually on the fringes of urban boroughs, and mostly where there were marginal seats, in order to gerrymander an electoral advantage, a policy that lasted until the 1867 Reform Act (Jones 2010, 133). Its success in Dresden is attested by 119 new voters by 1864. In the 1865

general election the local Tories were defeated, their two candidates receiving three votes between them, while the Liberal got 84 (Dobraszczyk 2001, 23).

**8.1.3** The Longton Freehold Land Society bought Spratslade Farm in 1850 for £6259 (Briggs 1983, 83), the equivalent today of £523,000 in relative value. The grid-iron plan of 190 plots closely matched the original layout of the field boundaries (FIGS 4 & 5). Fitting straight lines of streets into former fields maximized density, simplified the building process and reduced costs (Rodger 1995, 30). The plots at Dresden were each valued at about £30, divided into parcels worth at least 40 shillings and allocated to society members according to the number of shares held for that plot (Briggs 1983, 83).

**8.1.4** It has not been ascertained precisely from the documentary evidence when the house was built, although the freehold title was registered on 25<sup>th</sup> March 1851 (Land Registry). Members of freehold societies were usually fairly affluent, with the majority at Dresden drawn from a cross-section of the Longton business community (Dresden CAA 2008, 7). Whether an individual or a group invested in plot 97 has not been established. However, an individual who wanted his own house often found it cheaper to build two or more, perhaps reside in one himself and rent out the others (Caffyn 1986, 78).

**8.1.5** Housing built under the auspices of freehold societies could be of poor quality. It was sometimes so shoddy in Sheffield that it failed to achieve its forty shilling valuation (Dennis 1986, 182). In Birmingham, they were built in an 'irregular and reckless manner' (Gauldie 1974, 212). But the chief motives of the scheme were political not philanthropic, advocating property ownership so as to secure proprietary democracy. Thus if jerry-building brought enfranchisement closer, then jerry-building was deemed acceptable (Gauldie 1974, 208). The overall commercial success of the movement eventually outweighed the political stance and by the 1870s its societies were evolving into permanent building societies (Caffyn 1986, 77).

## **8.2** *Number 15 Cobden Street*

**8.2.1** As well as studying the structural evidence, it was hoped that socio-economic aspects of the cottage's occupants might be revealed by examining material artefacts discarded as refuse, primarily in the privy. Privy shafts typically extend below levels of disturbance common to urban areas and were convenient locations for disposing domestic waste (Genheimer 2003, 144). Previous investigation of privy sites in Stoke-on-Trent has provided some insight into domicillary conditions (see Cramp & Goodwin 2008).

**8.2.2** Historical cartographic and documentary sources, including the decennial national census returns, civil registration indices and local directories, were used to identify some of the owners and occupants associated with number 15 between 1881 and 1915, which reveals something of the social composition. Regrettably postal addresses on Cobden Street were not recorded in the 1861-71 censuses and most of the rate books and land society minutes have also not survived (Dobraszczyk 2001, 23), which prevented a more detailed study.

## **8.3** *The owners*

**8.3.1** The 1915 rate book reveals that Mary E. Gee owned numbers 15, 17 and 19 Cobden Street, and also 12, 14 and 16 Villiers Street, which occupied the same plot immediately to the rear. Mary was a widow residing in Longton in 1912 (Staffs Sentinel, 835) and presumably inherited on her husband Richard's decease in 1903 (Free BMD). Richard had already retired from blacksmithing by 1871 when he was 47, suggesting he had private means, perhaps as a landlord. Mary died in 1915 (Free BMD) and from the rate book it can be ascertained that possession passed to her son-in-law, Alfred J. Scarratt, who is recorded in the 1911 census as a 28 year old painter and decorator in Longton and had married Mary Gee's eldest daughter in 1910 (Free BMD).

**8.3.2** This pattern of real estate ownership was fairly typical for Dresden in the early 20<sup>th</sup>-century. Many of the houses were still held in small blocks by local artisans, clerks and shopkeepers, the intended beneficiaries of the freehold land movement. There were also a number of widows like Mary Gee who presumably inherited from husbands and were living on the rental incomes.

The 1915 rate book certifies that of the 89 properties on Cobden Street, 73 (82%) were rented and 16 owner-occupied. Terraced houses were nearly always rented, with rateable values of between £6 and £9 *per annum* (Dobraszczyk 2001, 24). Number 15, labelled 'house plus yard', was rated at £6 10s (Stoke Archives).

#### **8.4** *The residents*

**8.4.1** The first tenant of number 15 who can be verified is recorded in the 1881 census as Joshua Abbott (aged 27), a cabinet maker from Leicester (see Appendix 1). Although married, the only other occupant on census night is his daughter, Carry (aged three). They had obviously only moved to Dresden since her birth in 1877/8, although the stated birthplace does not seem to exist. Additionally, there is no record of them before or after 1881, nor any sign of Joshua's wife.

**8.4.2** By 1891 the occupants are a local family who were residing on Villiers Street in 1881. The household head is Richard Evans (42), a potter's miller. He would have worked in a mill where flint, stone and animal bone was burnt and softened in calcining kilns, before being ground to a fine powder used to whiten and strengthen the clay body of pottery (Graham 1908, 13). It is possible Richard was employed at the grinding mills known to be at Gom's Mill in the 1890s, just 500m to the north west. With Evans is his wife Mary (41) and three children: Sarah Jane (17), a potter, Jake (11) and Charles (five). The boys are listed as 'scholars' but this does not mean they attended school regularly. Although education was compulsory, the vagueness of the term scholar in the censuses disguises the fact that children like Jake might only periodically attend a school or receive instruction at Sunday school in order to comply, thereby allowing them to contribute to the household income (Higgs 1989, 83).

**8.4.3** By 1901 the Evans family have moved to 5 Cobden Street and number 15 is tenanted by Henry Simpson (45), a potter's placer from Newcastle-under-Lyme. In 1891 they had been living at 8 Cobden Street. Henry's job as a placer was physically demanding, requiring him to pack large clay containers ('saggars') with the items to be fired, and place them in the oven. After firing,

they removed the saggars. Contemporary commentators estimated that an average-sized pottery oven held around 2000 saggars (Graham 1908, 40).

**8.4.4** With Henry is his wife Elizabeth (38), a step-son, plasterer Richard Barlow (15), and his biological sons by Elizabeth, William (12) and Claude (eight). Henry was a widower when he married widow Elizabeth (*née* Hand) Barlow in 1888 (Free BMD) and the 1871 and 1881 censuses reveal she had grown up on Cobden Street. Assuming the family had not moved, Henry may have died at number 15 in 1903 (Free BMD). His death aged 48 might be occupation related, his health affected by the extreme variations in temperature that he had to endure and exposure to hot silica dust that produced respiratory ailments.

**8.4.5** By 1907 (Staffs Sentinel, 588), number 15 is occupied by a widow, Ellen Jackson. She is still resident in 1911, described as a 65 year old seamstress from the market town of Stone. With her is a grandson, Herbert Eli Jackson (seven), who is 'at school'. She may have moved to Dresden to support her son, Eli, a labourer, who is living at 105 Cobden Street in 1907 (Staffs Sentinel, 589). In July 1910 Eli was imprisoned for a year at Stafford gaol for '*wilfully endeavouring to kill and murder himself*' (National Archives), which partly explains why Herbert is with her. Ellen is still at number 15 in 1912 (Staffs Sentinel, 778). She may have stayed until her decease in 1918 (Free BMD), although the 1915 rate book does not list the tenants.

## **8.5** *Housing standards*

**8.5.1** The ground plan revealed by the evaluation implies that number 15 comprised one-and-a-half rooms, a layout that originated in the late 18<sup>th</sup> century and is sometimes known as a 'kitchen house'. Many were being erected in Liverpool between 1845 and 1860, coinciding with the period in which number 15 was probably constructed. The design is characteristic of a transition from the infamous back-to-back terrace to the familiar two-up-two-down through-house built in the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. In many respects the number 15 is similar to the latter type, with front and back doors and windows to provide through ventilation and light and with a private back yard (Muthesius 1982, 106).

**8.5.2** When compared with other workers' housing examined in Stoke-on-Trent, the Dresden plan closely resembles terraced cottages excavated on Elder Road, Cobridge, tentatively dated to c. 1805-30 (Cramp 2011, 24), and at Cliff Bank (later St Andrew's) Square, Penkhull, which are also early 19<sup>th</sup> century. Both were purpose-built for employees at nearby pottery works (Forrester 2005, 1; Cramp 2011, 26). As with number 15, the ground floor layout at Cobridge and Penkhull constituted a large front room with a narrow room at the rear but no cellar. At Cobridge there was a tiny back yard but no associated outbuildings nor any apparent exterior access (Cramp 2011, 24), while at Penkhull there was no back yard, instead a communal court with shared privies (Forrester 2005, 14).

**8.5.3** The external dimensions indicated on the 1878 OS map of 15 Cobden Street were confirmed by the archaeology as 4.0m wide and 7.50m deep. There was a forecourt, probably paved, which were usually intended to improve appearance and add privacy (Muthesius 1982, 76). The front elevation would have comprised the entrance and probably two windows, one to each floor, the southerly aspect ensuring maximum light in Room A. Not enough brickwork survived to determine the bonding, but the most common facing on contemporary buildings in the conservation area is Flemish bond (CAA 2008, 16), i.e. the bricks are laid as alternate header and stretcher in each course.

**8.5.4** The internal dimensions of Room A can be extrapolated as c. 4.80m NE-SW x 3.80m NW-SE, creating a living area totalling 18.24m<sup>2</sup>. The measurements for Room B are c. 2.10m NE-SW x 3.85m NW-SE, giving it a floor area of 8.09m<sup>2</sup>. The combined ground floor space therefore amounted to 26.33m<sup>2</sup>. Assuming the upper storey was of the same proportions, number 15's total floor area (excluding the cellar) was 52.66m<sup>2</sup>. By way of comparison, the average size of a modern one-bedroom flat is 45m<sup>2</sup> (English Housing Survey 2010, 17).

**8.5.5** The front door was in the south-east corner, opening directly into Room A. The service pipe inferred by the gap in wall (134) would have run under the doorway, extending out beneath the front path. The location of the staircase footings (133) imply the stairs to the upper floor started behind the door. The

upper part of (133) was presumably boxed in, with a door to access the cellar steps (141).

**8.5.6** Room A would have been the principal 'living room' and probably had multiple uses, including eating and possibly sleeping (Yorke 2005, 96). Cooking may have been done here, perhaps on a cast-iron range, although typically when built there may have been no facilities other than an open grate (Eveleigh 2006). However it was arranged, it was accepted practice in smaller houses of the period to combine warming the main room with heating water and cooking (Muthesius 1982, 53).

**8.5.7** Given the utilitarian nature and concomitant lack of privacy, it is unlikely this front room conformed to the Victorian ideal of being kept for best, which the two-up, two-down subsequently offered. The variety of functions employed in Room A may also explain its floor area of 18.24m<sup>2</sup>, representing 69% of number 15's total footprint. This compares with 12.80m<sup>2</sup> for the front room at Cobridge, equating to 70% of its overall ground plan (Cramp 2011, 13), and the 17.55m<sup>2</sup> (68%) at Penkhull (Forrester 2005, 3). In contrast, the front parlour of a standard two-up, two-down excavated on Garibaldi Street, Etruria, was proportionally smaller at 13.80m<sup>2</sup> (46%) (Cramp & Goodwin 2008, 11).

**8.5.8** With the introduction of portable gas ovens in the 1890s (Muthesius 1982, 53), Room B may well have become a kitchen in the modern sense. This would have permitted its inclusion as a 'room' in the census schedules from 1891 onwards. What actually defined a room during this period was never resolved by the enumerators (Higgs 1989, 56), but sculleries and out-buildings were officially disregarded. The small size of such rooms was also deliberate, to discourage their use as everyday 'living' rooms (Churton 1921, 144). Whether Room B was initially designed as some other service room, such as a pantry, is uncertain. At Penkhull there were features suggesting its back room was used for washing and/or cooking (Forrester 2005, 3). Unlike those at Penkhull and Cobridge, at Dresden Room B had a back door permitting external access to the dwelling *via* its own private yard.

**8.5.9** The cellar beneath Room B resembled one found in a property at Penkhull, which also had a barrel-vaulted ceiling and blue brick paved floor (Forrester 2005, 11). The whitewash coating on the walls is characteristic of nearly all domestic cellars previously encountered. The cold slab (144) against the cooler north-facing wall (131) suggests the cellar served as a 'dry larder' for storing dairy and meat foodstuffs (Yorke 2005, 103). If it extended as far as the original gable wall, the slab would be c. 1.60m long. By the early 20<sup>th</sup> century this subterranean arrangement was regarded as archaic (Churton 1921, 144). There was no indication of alcoves or shelving within the cellar.

**8.5.10** It is not known how the upper storey of the cottage was arranged, although the censuses imply two bedrooms. Well-placed partitions could have divided the available floor space into acceptable accommodation, even for families. In the Evans household, for example, the two boys presumably shared a room, the daughter had her own while the parents utilised the downstairs living room. Nevertheless, there would have been little privacy.

**8.5.11** The out-building would have been single storey, divided into two units by cross wall (123). The larger space (Room C) had internal dimensions of c. 2.0m NE-SW x 1.80m NW-SE, giving a floor surface area of 3.60m<sup>2</sup>. It is possible this was the scullery, also known as a wash-house, which was a versatile area where the laundry was done as well as other messy domestic tasks (Muthesius 1982, 48). The sculleries at Cobridge and Penkhull were probably located in the back room or a shared facility, but at Dresden it may be in the out-building. The proximity of waste pipe (127) to this structure rather than the house may support this hypothesis, although the absence of dating evidence from the overlying fill cannot confirm it. Although not previously encountered in Stoke-on-Trent, a detached scullery was not uncommon in the West Midlands (Muthesius 1982, 91), with examples also found elsewhere, such as Bradford, West Yorkshire (Caffyn 1986, 102).

**8.5.12** The scullery would have had a paved brick floor and at least one sink, as well as the washing copper, which was a small tank enclosed in a brick surround with a fire below for heating water (Yorke 2005, 102). The partially exposed



stepped brickwork (126) may indicate its location, as the copper was invariably placed in a corner. The presence of a copper or range, which blasted out heat every day all year round, probably also precludes the possibility that Room B was a scullery, as it would make the cellar unsuitable as a cool larder.

**8.5.13** The second room (Room D) at the north-east end of the out-building was a very confined space, with internal dimensions estimated at c. 0.80m NE-SW x 1.80m NW-SE, totalling 1.44m<sup>2</sup>, which suggest this was a shed, perhaps for coal storage. That the room was defined by layer (121) and indeed that cross wall (123) had been set on it was initially interpreted as implying this space belonged to a different phase of building as it did not overlie levelling layer (136), which was believed to be an original deposit. The ceramic inclusions within horizon (121) were, however, of similar date to those within (136), indicating a broadly similar chronology for its construction.

**8.5.14** The 1878 OS map shows the entrance to the back yard in the north-east corner beside the privy. It led to a plot which extended a further 4.0m to a boundary wall, beyond which is a similar layout for premises on Villiers Street. The purpose of this communal space, shared with numbers 17 and 19, is unclear but it may be a laundry drying ground. As the properties lack a rear service road, it could have enabled coal deliveries or the removal of 'night-soil' from cesspools. A footpath ran past the back gates, providing access to the street *via* a passage down the side of number 19.

## **8.6** *The privy*

**8.6.1** Although the sanitary arrangements of urban dwellings in the mid-Victorian period (c. 1850-70) were simple, detailed knowledge is lacking (Eveleigh 2006). To address this issue, the report on Garibaldi Street, Etruria, advocated that all projects of a similar nature in Stoke-on-Trent should target privies, to facilitate a greater understanding of precisely how these structures functioned and to determine any variety in privy design, by area and over time, and to identify evidence of technological innovation (Cramp & Goodwin 2008, 43).

- 8.6.2** Historically, the expansion of urban and industrial centres invariably overwhelmed already inadequate or non-existent sanitation systems during the early half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, leading to repeated outbreaks of cholera and typhus. As a result the 1848 Public Health Act stated that all new-build houses required a water closet, privy or ashpit (Blair 2012, 6), so it is likely number 15 was built under the auspices of the act.
- 8.6.3** The Cobden Street example may have started as a basic privy, comprising a brick-lined rectangular shaft or cess chamber, over which would have been a fixed wooden bench, with a round hole as the seat (Eveleigh 2008, 7). The original depth of the shaft (**115**) is unknown, but given the amount by which number 15 was reduced during demolition, a depth of *c.* 0.90m below ground level seems plausible. It was not uncommon for the shaft to discharge into an external cesspool *via* a short inclined drain (Eveleigh 2008, 10). In 1899 it was noted that in the Longton area cesspools with stone tops were often placed at the backs of houses under the footpaths (Warrillow 1960, 318). It is possible that the gap at the northern end of the shaft may indicate the outlet, colloquially known as a 'bob-hole', to such a cesspool (PL 10).
- 8.6.4** The privy shaft was constructed from bricks stamped FENTON TILERIES, a brick and tile works located at the Glebe Colliery in Fenton. The business is not in Harrod's trade directory of 1870, but it is extant by 1875 (D. Kitching, pers. comm.). This would suggest a *terminus post quem* of *c.* 1870 at the earliest for this shaft and implies that it may have replaced an earlier version - assuming the dwelling dates to 1851-61. Alternatively it may indicate that the property was built later than previously believed.
- 8.6.5** The lower base (**138**) in the shaft is difficult to explain, especially as the ceramic inclusions within the overlying fill (**137**) are of similar date to backfill (**114**) in the main body of the shaft. It is possible (**138**) represents a vestigial phase of privy construction, perhaps due to a change in the plans, or that it is a false bottom or somehow assisted the drainage. It is equally unclear why this part of the structure was sealed by a new base (**135**), although as it blocked off the bob-hole it may have been to keep the shaft dry. Another possibility is that

it was simply added to prevent subsidence of the overlying fill when a WC was installed.

**8.6.6** It does appear, however, from the homogeneity of the ceramics present in (114), that this fill is of a single phase and may represent a transition to another type of toilet, such as an ash privy, which avoided the worst excesses of overflowing cesspools. This type of dry privy, increasingly popular from the mid-1860s, might entail rebuilding the shaft, as the design required a waterproof pit to prevent seepage. It might also be smaller, to avoid undue accumulation and ensure regular cleaning out by night-soil men (Eveleigh 2008, 21-2). The contents of the shaft would be kept dry by using the absorbent powers of earth or, especially in urban areas, ash or cinders, which also acted as deodorising agents (Eveleigh 2008, 19). Sometimes the ash was dropped using mechanical hoppers and although there were no diagnostic features within the privy indicative of any fittings, the end room (Room D) in the adjoining out-building did appear to incorporate the privy in its construction, implying the possible presence of such a system.

**8.6.7** Alternatively, it may be that conversion to a water closet (WC) system was undertaken, possibly in the late 1870s when Longton borough corporation began laying sewers to an outfall at Blurton Waste (Warrillow 1960, 190). Most old privies in Longton were converted to WC's by 1899, when a sewage treatment farm was opened at Blurton (Warrillow 1960, 317), and elicits a possible *terminus ante quem* for the final abandonment of the Cobden Street privy and its replacement by a more conventional flush toilet, as represented by pipe (112).

**8.6.8** It seems likely that the L-shaped feature (113)/(116) abutting the north west side of the privy shaft represents the 'walk-in' part of the closet, with a door located over (116). The rather ephemeral nature of wall (113) suggests it may belong to a different phase of construction than (116), perhaps representing a hasty rebuild. The material used for the underlying layers, (121) for (113) and (118) for (116), also imply different phases but the similarity in dates for the pottery inclusions may indicate that if such work was undertaken then either

the time frame was not excessive or that different materials were adopted for some reason, but in a single phase of construction.

## **9.0 Conclusions**

**9.1** A single, linear evaluation trench was excavated at 15 Cobden Street, Dresden, in order to ascertain the nature of archaeological deposits and features within the PDA and to evaluate the potential impact of the development upon them. Although limited in its extent, the project confirmed the survival at quite shallow depths of below-ground structural remains, which can be used to augment the existing corpus of knowledge regarding urban housing in the area.

**9.2** The site had suffered significant horizontal truncation during demolition and the property had been reduced to below floor level. However, with the exception of the cellar backfill, there was surprisingly little CBM, with a complete absence of roof or floor tiles. Given that the adjoining dwellings, numbers 17 and 19, probably survive to the same degree, it is unlikely that the information inherent in them would have helped elucidate the developmental history of the site or enhance the archaeological analysis of any domestic activity. The constricted nature of the plot meant that a larger trench was never a viable option.

**9.3** The earliest available documentation indicates the target property was extant by 1878. The lack of cartographic evidence before this date is unfortunate, as it may have clarified the chronology relating to construction of the dwelling and the associated out-building and privy. The archaeology was unable to refine this chronology to any date earlier than the 1870s, and even then only circumstantially. Only the ceramic waste within the levelling material below the out-building suggested earlier activity. However, as this material was probably imported to site, it is not possible to reach any conclusions regarding the early history of the property. How the same material ended up as backfill within the privy shaft is unclear, but presumably it was sourced from within the bounds of the site when the privy was finally abandoned in favour of a water closet.

- 9.4** Nonetheless, the investigation was able to identify the property as being one-and-a-half rooms deep, a type that could be compared with previous examples excavated in Stoke-on-Trent. Despite the dubious construction of some houses built under the freehold land scheme, the Cobden Street example, although of archaic design, appears to have been soundly built and displays evidence of being a slightly superior property when compared with the average urban working-class dwelling. Although still an urban cottage, it does appear to represent a through terrace at an early stage in its evolution. An enclosed back-yard and being set back from the roadside hint at attempts to invoke privacy and it seems possible that the property was also built with a reasonable level of sanitation in mind. Front and rear entrances indicate through ventilation.
- 9.5** The evaluation produced only a modest finds assemblage. Nothing in the way of domestic or personal artifacts that could be associated with household activity was encountered. The area around the dwelling was virtually sterile, with most finds concentrated in the out-building / privy area. The presence of significant amounts of pottery production waste, including kiln furniture and saggar, points to it being imported, presumably as levelling material, and that most - if not all the finds - are secondary deposits. It is therefore not possible to formulate any conclusions regarding the socio-economic conditions of the occupants at Cobden Street which could be compared with the material culture previously retrieved from the privies, such as those in Etruria.
- 9.6** The documentary evidence indicates that the property was built under the auspices of a politically inspired scheme to generate a middle-class electorate by enabling them to own their own land. Ownership of number 15 into the 20<sup>th</sup>-century may even have been restricted to one extended family. It is also possible that they were responsible for the cottage's construction. The censuses, however, indicate that the occupants were a fairly typical cross-section of urban workers. Whether the small size of the dwelling means that it was never intended for families is uncertain, but families did reside there. Whether they did through choice, such as its convenient location for a workplace or because the rent was relatively low cannot be known.

- 9.7** It is clear that further comparative work on 19<sup>th</sup>- and early 20<sup>th</sup>-century properties - and their occupants - in the Stoke-on-Trent region would enhance interpretations regarding the development of local urban housing and the socio-economic conditions of their inhabitants.

## **10.0 Acknowledgements**

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- 10.2** CSARC extends its thanks to the client, Mr Shabir Hussain; to Stoke-on-Trent City Council Senior Planning Officer (Archaeology), Jonathan Goodwin MfA, who also provided specialist analysis of the ceramic finds; the staff at Stoke-on-Trent City Archives; brick specialist David Kitching, for information on Fenton Tileries; Hood Plant Hire Ltd; Supply UK Hire Shop (North); Portable Toilets Ltd, for their valuable assistance and co-operation.
- 10.3** Map data is reproduced by permission of Ordnance Survey on behalf of H.M.S.O. © Crown Copyright. All rights reserved. License No. 1000551532.

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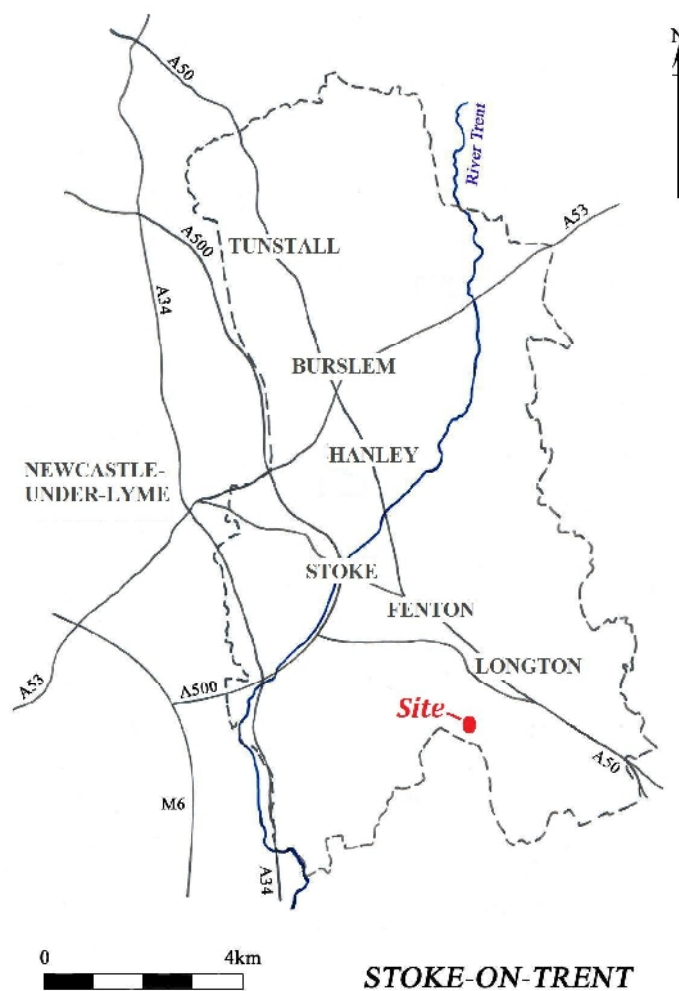
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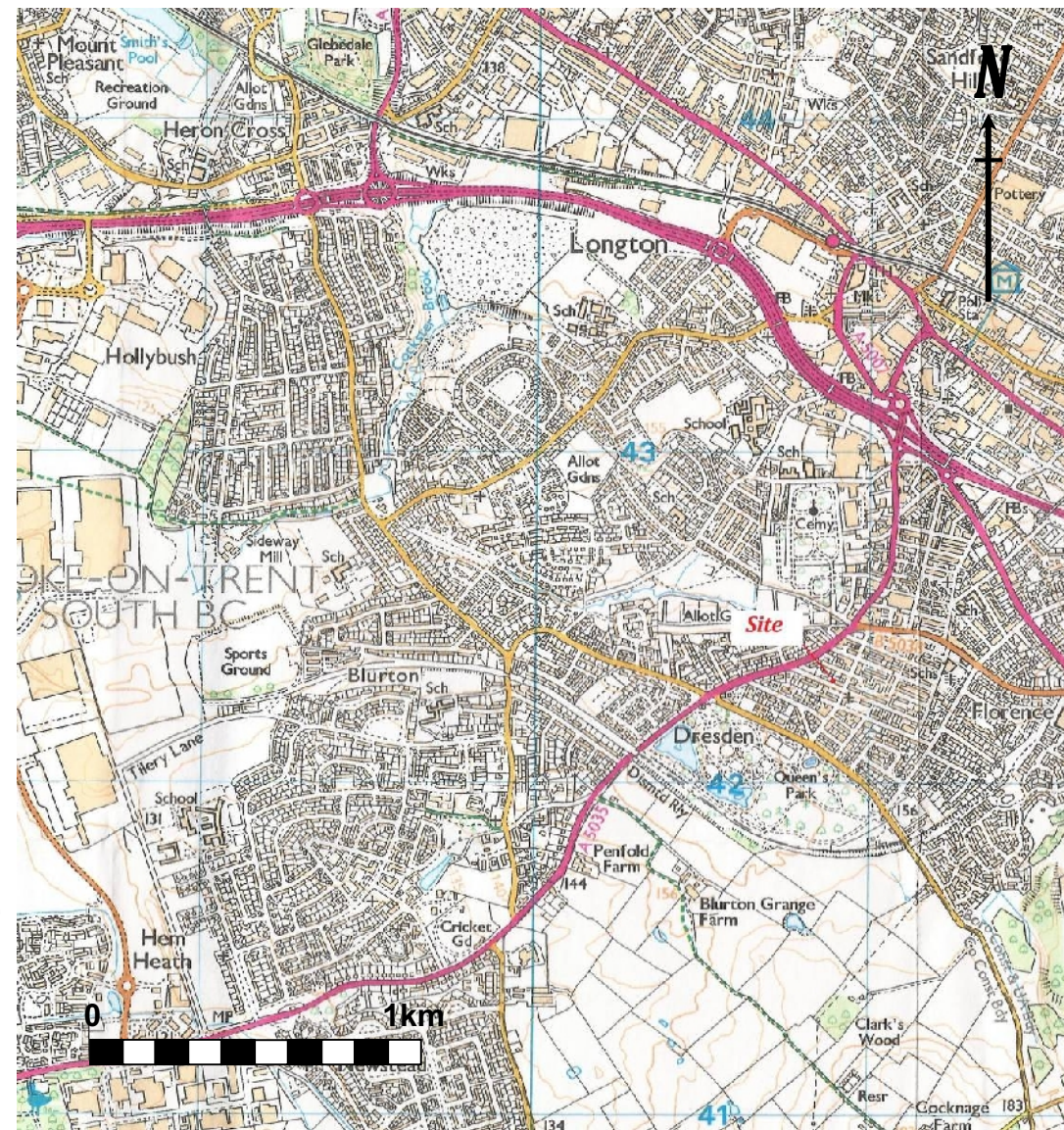
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**FIG. 1**

Site location







**FIG. 2**

Site plan, with the trench location outlined in red.



FIG. 3

Extract from Yates' 1775 map with general location of PDA marked by red dot.

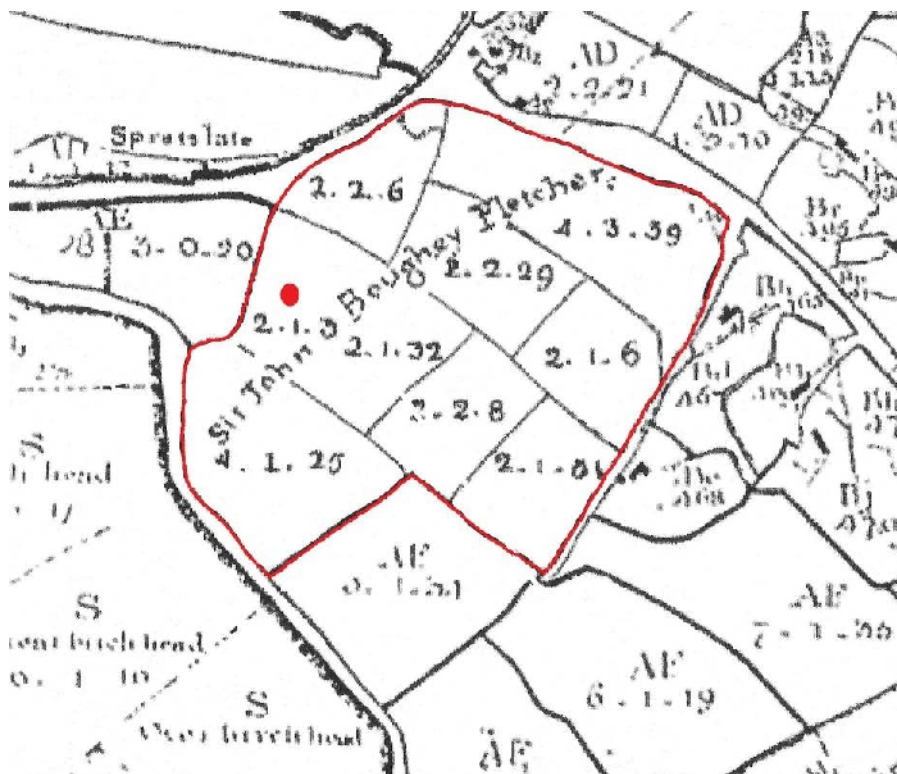
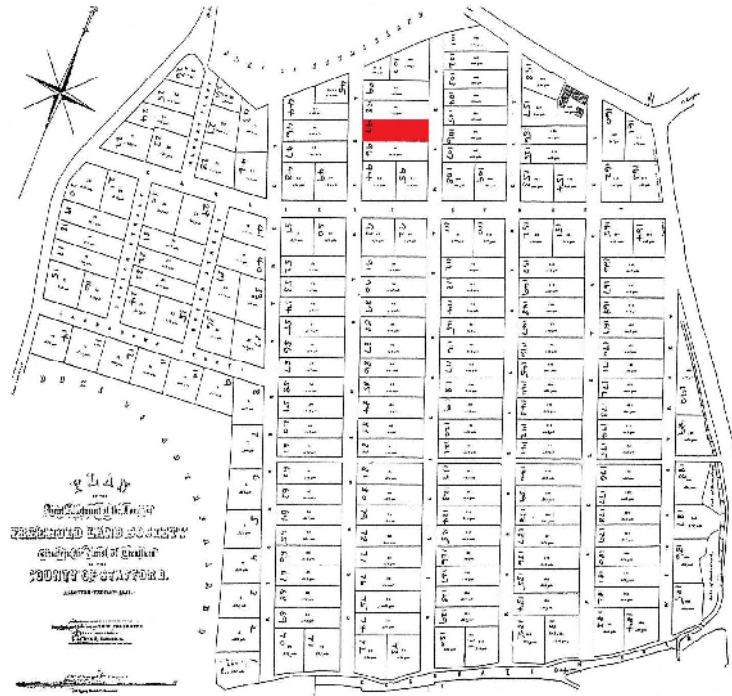


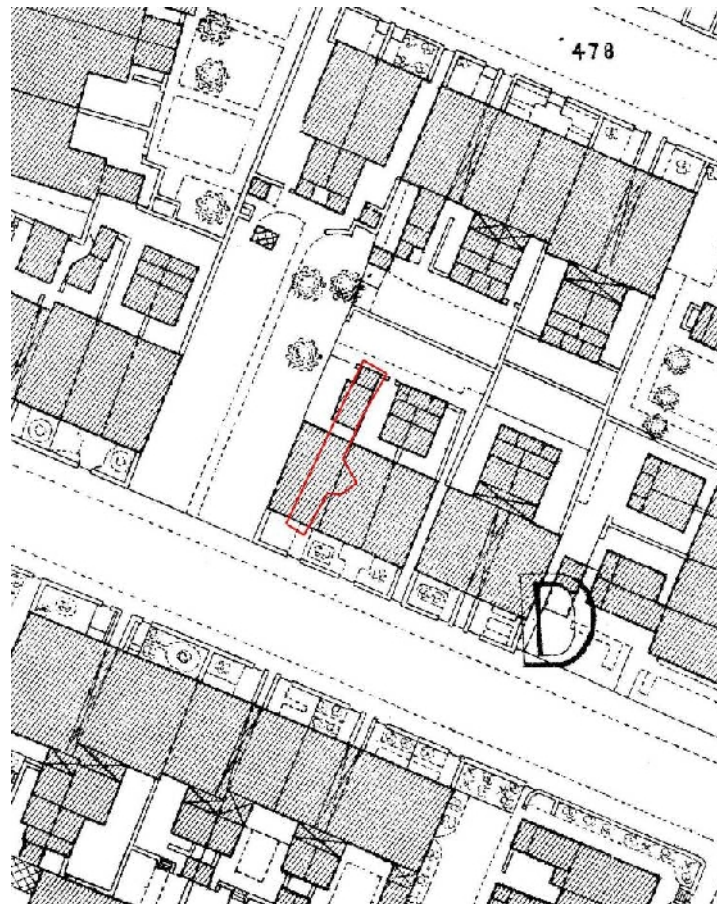
FIG. 4

Extract from Fulton's 1815 map with boundary of Spratslade Farm / Dresden estate defined in red. Approximate location of PDA marked by red dot (after Dobraszczyk 2001).



**FIG. 5**

The 1851 plan of the Dresden estate, with plot 97 highlighted in red (after Dobraszczyk 2001).



**FIG. 6**

Extract from 1878 OS map with trench outlined in red.





**FIG. 7**

Extract from 1900 OS map with trench outlined in red.



**FIG. 8**

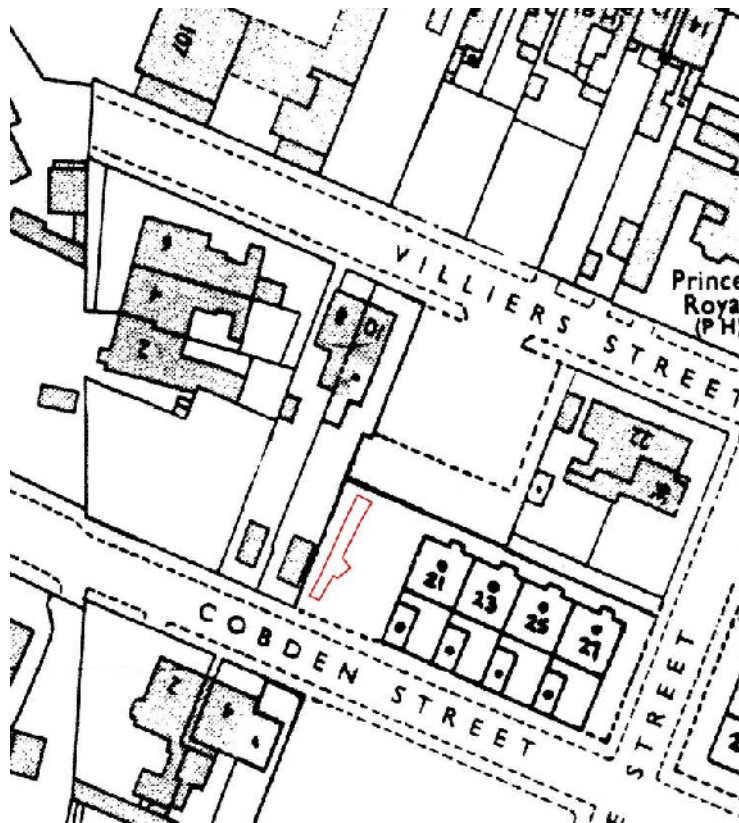
Extract from 1937 OS map with trench outlined in red.





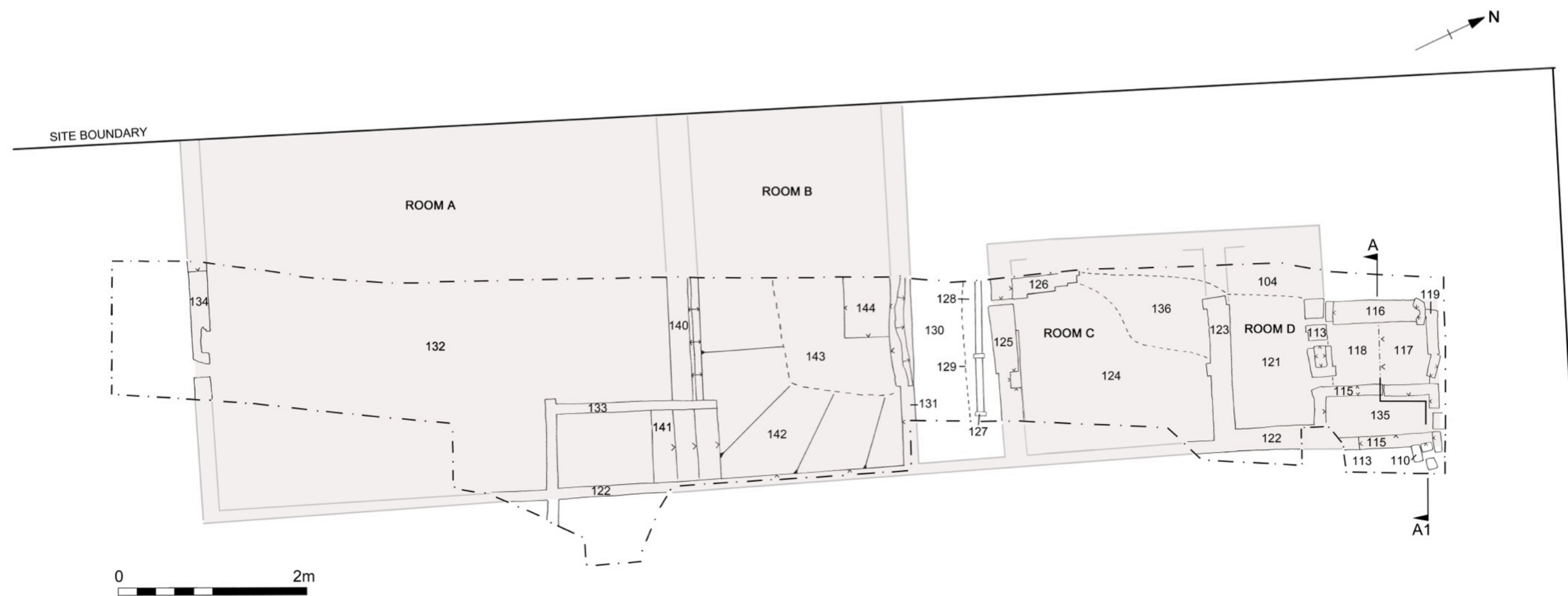
**FIG. 9**

Extract from 1954 OS map with trench outlined in red.



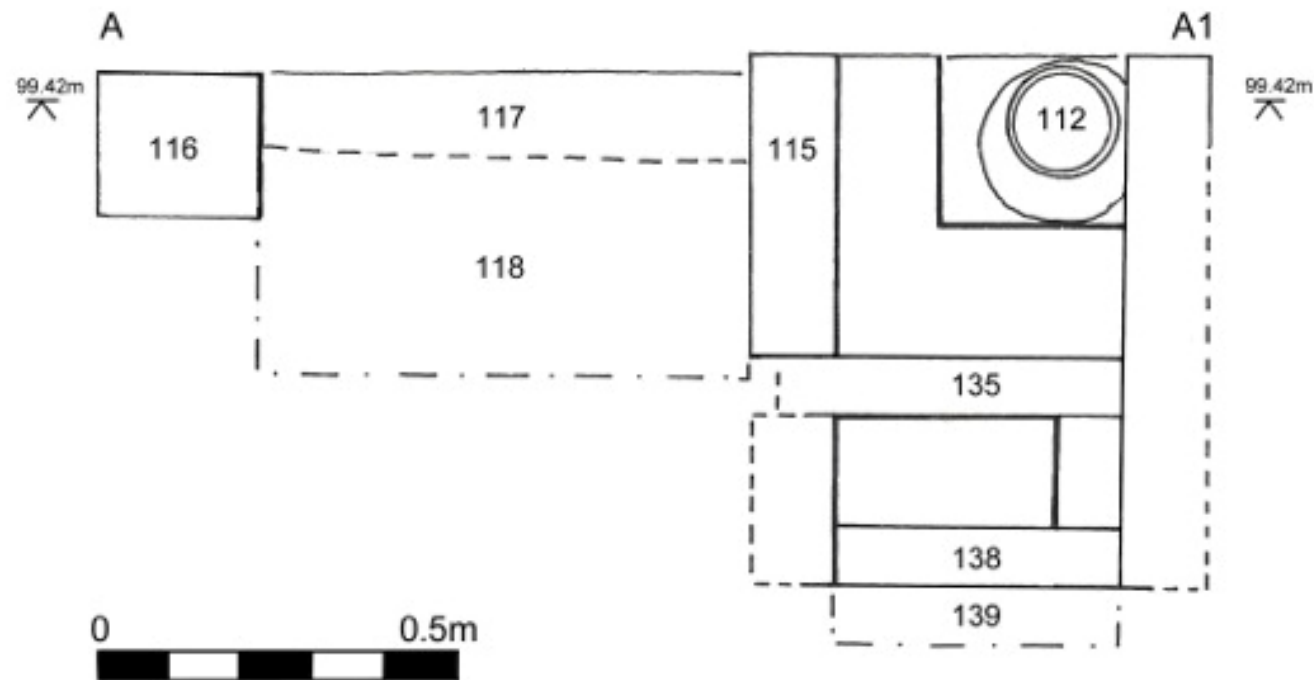
**FIG. 10**

Extract from 1982 OS map with trench outlined in red.



**Fig. 11**

Post-excavation plan of trench superimposed on an outline of the cottage derived from the 1878 OS map.



**FIG. 12**

South-west-facing section across privy.





**PL 1**

General view of trench, looking SW (scales 1.0m x 2.0m).



**PL 2**

Front exterior wall (**134**), looking NW. Note its continuation in site boundary wall (scales 0.25m x 1.0m).



**PL 3**

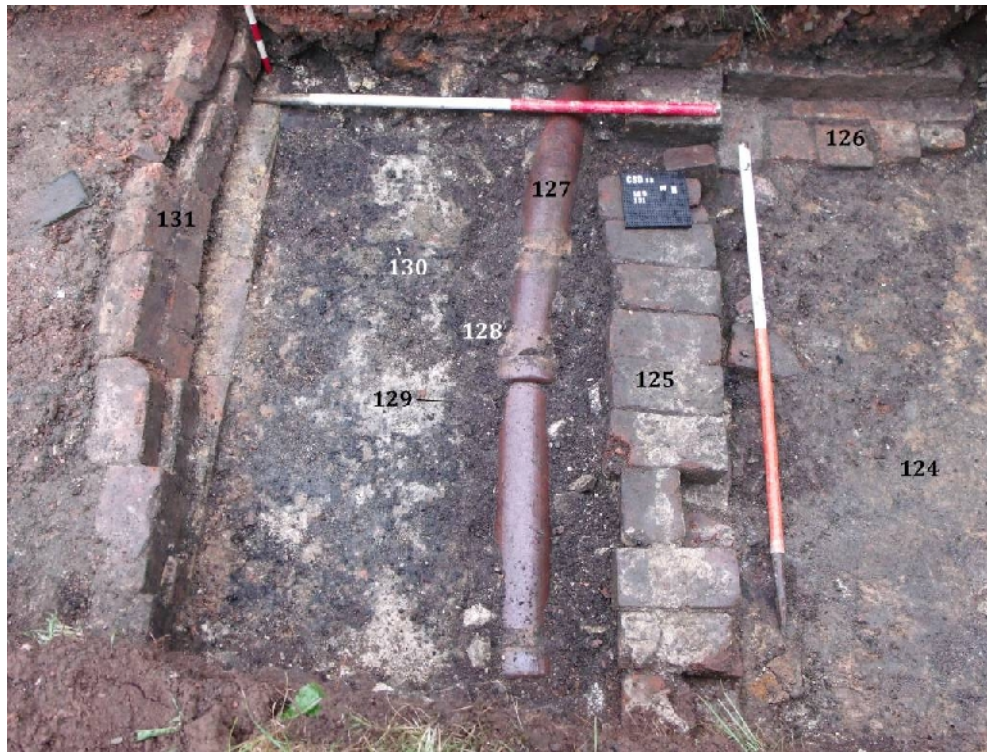
Top of cellar steps (141), looking NW. Note springer bricks on wall (140), top right (scales 0.25m x 1.0m).



**PL 4**

Working shot of cellar under excavation, looking south. Note blue brick floor (143) (Image courtesy of Mr. S. Hussain).





**PL 5**

View looking NW, showing gap between rear of house (131) and out-building (125). Note stepped brickwork (126) (scales 0.25m x 1.0m).



**PL 6**

General view of out-building, looking NE (scales 1.0m x 2.0m).





**PL 7**

View of privy closet prior to full excavation,  
looking north east (scales 0.25m & 1.0m).



**PL 8**

Post-excavation detail of privy shaft, looking north east  
(scales 0.25m & 1.0m).





**PL 9**

Post-excavation detail of privy shaft, looking south west.  
Note straight join in side wall (scales 0.25m & 1.0m).



**PL 10**

Detail of privy shaft, looking north east. Note lower base  
and 'bob-hole' (scales 0.25m & 1.0m).





**PL 11**

L-shaped feature in front of privy shaft,  
looking south west (scales 0.25m & 1.0m).