

Marches Archaeology

Town Walls Garage
Town Walls
Shrewsbury
Shropshire

**A report on an
archaeological watching brief**

May 2005

Marches Archaeology Series 379

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Town Walls
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Report on an Archaeological Watching Brief

Report by

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Contents

<i>Summary</i>	1
1 Introduction	1
2 Archaeological and Historical Background	1
3 Scope and aims of the project	2
4 Methodology	2
5 The site	3
6 The evaluation	4
7 The watching brief	4
8 The pottery by Stephanie Rátkai	10
9 The animal bones by Ian L Baxter	16
10 Discussion	16
11 References	17
12 The archive	18
Appendix 1 A Clay Tobacco Pipe from the Town Wall Garage Dr D A Higgins	19

List of illustrations

Fig. 1 Location of the site

Fig. 2 Detail of the site including location of the garage with earlier buildings (from the 1st edition Ordnance Survey map) and test pits superimposed

Fig. 3 Location of the trenches showing principal medieval features and details of old wall footings and other disturbance

Fig. 4 The main site profiles on the east and south sides of the footing

Fig. 5 Trench sections

May 2005
Marches Archaeology Series 379

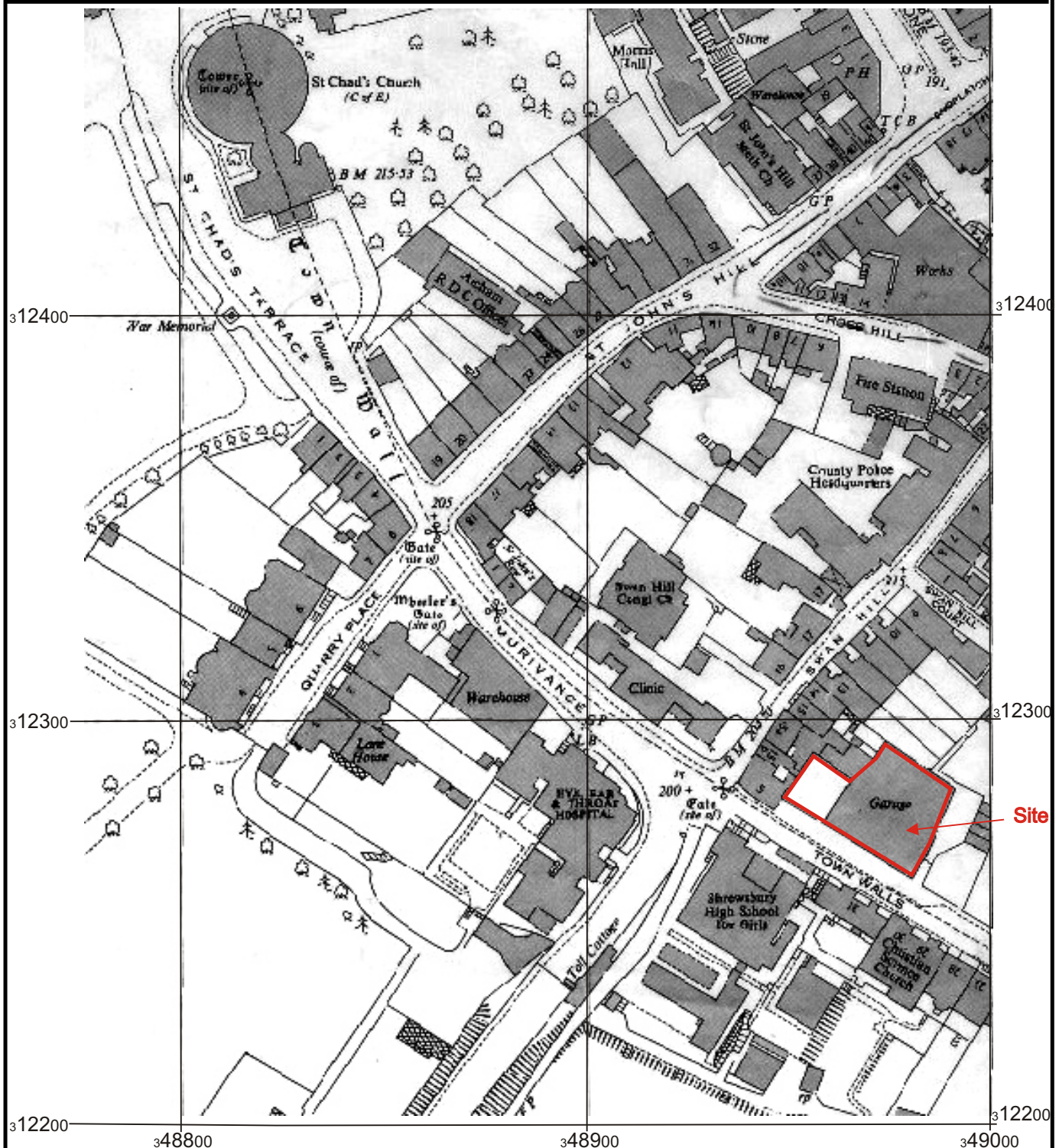


Fig.1 Location of the Site

Town Walls Garage
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Report on an Archaeological Watching Brief

Summary

An evaluation trench excavated to the west of the garage in 2001 disclosed a medieval cultivation soil and a ditch running parallel to the line of the medieval town wall. As a result, a watching brief was undertaken during development in 2004. The watching brief found extensive areas of the same cultivated soil sequence with occasional medieval pits and early post-medieval pits suggesting the site was part of backplot land. A small part of a very deep and extensive feature in the south-west corner of the site may have been associated with settlement of the site, but the groundworks were not deep or extensive enough to allow any firm conclusion. The site was probably not formally developed until the late 18th century. There was no evidence for the burials reportedly found in 1887.

1 Introduction

Planning permission was granted by the local planning authority for permission to erect a terrace of four houses on the site of the Town Walls Garage, Town Walls, Shrewsbury (ref. SY01/0096 – see Fig. 1). The initial application had led to the Local Planning Authority’s Archaeology Advisor recommending an archaeological field evaluation. The results of the evaluation led to a condition being placed upon the development that the works be subject to an archaeological watching brief. The Local Planning Authority’s Archaeology Advisor produced a “Brief for an archaeological watching brief”. Shropshire Homes (the client) commissioned Marches Archaeology to provide the archaeological services.

2 Archaeological and Historical Background

The archaeological background of the site was researched by Dr. Nigel Baker prior to the excavation of the evaluation trench (Baker, 2001). His results showed that, although the site lies just within the defensive wall of the medieval town, it probably lay outside the built up area of the medieval town and was probably not developed before the later 18th century. The site was first used as a garage at an unknown date but before 1936.

A report dated 1887 indicated that human skeletal material had been found either on this site, or in its immediate vicinity (Leighton, 1887). The burials possibly belonged to the documented medieval chapel of St Werburgh, but were deemed more likely to have derived from an extensive burial ground associated with the Saxon minster church of St Chad (Baker, 2001).

3 Scope and aims of the project

The initial field evaluation comprised the excavation of a single trench 10m long by 2m wide (Trench 1 on Fig. 3).

The objectives of the initial evaluation had been to:-

- establish the presence or absence of human skeletal remains in the area
- determine the earliest date of activity on the site after any cemetery use

The scope of the watching brief was defined in the Brief as archaeological supervision and monitoring of all groundworks required for the development.

The aims of an archaeological watching brief are defined by the Institute of Field Archaeologists as:-

'to allow, within the resources available, the preservation by record of archaeological deposits, the presence and nature of which could not be established (or established with sufficient accuracy) in advance of development or other potentially disruptive works'

and:

'to provide an opportunity, if needed, for the watching archaeologist to signal to all interested parties, before the destruction of the material in question, that an archaeological find has been made for which the resources allocated to the watching brief itself are not sufficient to support a treatment to a satisfactory and proper standard.

4 Methodology

4.1 Fieldwork

Before fieldwork commenced the Local Planning Authority's Archaeology Advisor was consulted to determine an appropriate repository for the archive.

At the time of the initial evaluation the garage building was still standing (Fig. 2). The evaluation trench had been sited within an area shown as being open ground on all maps predating 1927. The garage, including all its floor slabs, was demolished shortly before the watching brief which was undertaken in a single phase of fieldwork during the excavation of the main footing for the new building (Fig. 3) which lies almost entirely within the footprint of the recently demolished garage building. The overall findings from this phase of the watching brief had characterised the general history of the usage of the site and indicated that the later (and much more minor) groundworks for drainage and garden walls would almost certainly not encounter significant archaeological deposits. These later groundworks were not observed.

The footing for the new building comprised a single continuous trench of complex plan, but essentially forming an outer wall with three internal partitions (Fig. 3). The trench was excavated by a 5 ton mechanical excavator fitted with a 2 foot (600mm wide) bucket, the bucket teeth being shielded with the standard 'shoe' used for footings. One of the main aims

was to find good solid ground, so the footing was taken down rapidly to the top of natural subsoil and in some areas deeper. As work progressed, the sides of the trench were cleaned, photographed, drawn and recorded and limited appropriate hand excavation was undertaken to retrieve dating evidence. All artefactual and ecofactual material recovered from hand excavation was initially retained.

The recording system includes written, drawn and photographic data. Context numbers were allocated and context record sheets completed. A running matrix was maintained. Plans and sections were drawn at 1:20. The photographic record was made using black and white negative and colour transparency film.

4.2 *Office work*

On completion of fieldwork a site archive was prepared. The written, drawn and photographic data were catalogued and cross-referenced and a summary produced. The artefactual and ecofactual data was processed, catalogued and cross-referenced and summaries produced. After the initial assessment unstratified non-diagnostic artefacts and ecofacts were discarded.

5 **The site**

The site lies on the north side of the street known as Town Walls (occasionally 'Murivance' in former times). Part of the medieval town wall including an intact tower can still be seen some 100m to the east of the site, The medieval town walls passes east-west by the site some 10m to the south under the pavement on the south side of the street.

The site was formerly The Town Walls Garage. This was demolished just before the watching brief leaving a level site covered in brick rubble lying just above 61 metres above Ordnance Datum. The site had already been converted to a level terrace by cutting in from Town Walls at the virtually the same level as the street in the 18th century when the site was first formally developed. The ground had been reduced to the top of the subsoil or lower all across the north half of the site. The demolished garage floor comprised two heavy duty concrete slabs. The slab inside the workshop (slab [607] on Fig. 4 and top of Fig 5) was higher than the slab between the workshop and the road (slab [604]). The ground works for these slabs had truncated the site slightly further than had been achieved in the 18th century, but all indications were that the damage to archaeological deposits had been largely carried out in the 18th century. Examination of the ground surface just outside the site boundaries to the north (see levels on Fig 2) and east (see Fig. 4 – east site profile) show that the site used to slope markedly upwards to the north. Similar levels have probably been removed from the site although they may, perhaps more correctly, have been prevented from accumulating once the site had been developed in the 18th century. The area to the north of the footing had been truncated and was covered with c. 0.25m of brick rubble, obscuring any features in this area and the subsoil was never exposed.

The footing was excavated by machine in seventeen separate operations, each followed by a pour of concrete, although there was usually more than one trench in one day. The trenches (2 to 18) were dug in the order in which they are numbered on Fig. 3, i.e. starting at the eastern end of the site working westwards back towards the evaluation carried out in 2001

(trench 1). The footing was recorded archaeologically as though it was a series of separate trenches because the first groundworks were a series of 'metre fill' boxes c. 1.3m square dug along the eastern boundary of the site to underpin the lane which lies just outside that boundary. This underpinning was carried out as 6 separate excavations (trenches 3 to 8 - see Fig 4 and Fig. 5). The 'metre fill' technique means that there is never a continuous section exposed, the adjacent part of the section to one or both sides being entirely obscured behind concrete. Thus, the drawn section of the eastern site edge was an amalgamation of cumulative drawings. The section proved to be one of the more complex, and it was often difficult to be certain which layers were equal. Different context numbers were allocated to what may or may not have been the same layer in adjacent 'metre fill' boxes so that the finds could be kept separated in different number sequences to be related in the post-excavation process.

6 The evaluation

The evaluation (Trench 1) found a greyish brown silty sand [04] interpreted as a relict cultivation soil (Appleton-Fox, 2001) and overlying the natural. Soil [04] was c. 0.4m thick, contained pottery dating from the 12th to 14th centuries and also contained frequent patches of yellowish brown slightly silty sand (Appleton-Fox, 2001). Soil [04] was cut by a ditch [10] that was 1 metre deep, at least 3 metres wide and had gently sloping sides. The lower fill [09] of the ditch was a yellowish brown silty sand with lenses of greyish brown silty sand. This fill was restricted to the north side of the cut. The overlying fill [08] was a greyish brown sandy silt with mottles of yellowish brown silty sand. It is possible that the two fills represent two phases in the life of the ditch with the dividing line between [08] and [09] being a recut. However, both layers produced similar pottery with a date range from the 12th to the 14th centuries.

The south edge of ditch [10] was cut by a pit 16th century pit [12] which in turn was cut by a large 19th century pit [14] containing broken brick fragments, mortar flecks and coal.

The relict soil horizon [04] was overlain by a layer of very dark brown silty sand with bricks and other pieces of demolition rubbish [03], i.e. fill of cut [208]. This modern disturbance was 0.7m thick sealed all earlier features but was cut by a very modern drain, a very modern rubbish pit [6] and a length of brick walling [7] (Appleton-Fox, 2001).

7 The watching brief

7.1 Introduction

The ground surface of the lane to the immediate east of the site lies at a higher level than the ground surface within the site (see tarmac ground surface marked on Fig. 4). It is likely that the tarmac surface is artificially high, but nonetheless, it almost certainly indicates that site was formerly a natural slope. The evidence provided by the various surviving brick footings of the 18th century houses that occupied the site in 1882 (see Fig. 2) indicated that the site had been almost certainly converted into a near level terrace in the 18th century by cutting in from the road northwards as a large cut [208] over whole site, i.e., that the main damage to the site was inflicted in the 18th century when all archaeological deposits were removed across the northern half of the site and the subsoil exposed. A layer of mixed loam and bricks

[1] / [207] was added or trampled over cut [208] across the middle, south and west of the site, presumably to make up the ground level.

At the northern edge of the site, truncation by cut [208] had probably removed more than 0.4m depth of the subsoil and probably all smaller features in the process. This levelling had been taken slightly deeper locally within the site during the creation of the concrete floor slabs for the garage in c. 1950. These garage floor slabs were broken out by machine just before the start of the watching brief in 2004 and the top of spread [207] was loosened and disturbed by the demolition crew and more bricks were spread across the surface. Layer [207] was largely left in situ, i.e., the underlying layers were only re-exposed in the footing trench.

7.2 *Natural*

The site is underlain by a sequence of geological deposits of glacial or earlier origin. The lowest layer seen was usually at c. 1.5m below ground level. It was a soft and very clean light pink / red sand [600]. This featured minor variations in the form of horizontal bands and is probably the natural Old Red Sandstone bedrock degraded *in situ*. This was directly overlain (with a very sharp boundary) by very a very loose voided clean gravel [602] which was c. 0.6m deep. The gravel varied locally between 0.03m and 0.10m in size at the east end of the footing. It was, in turn, overlain by a similar gravel [200] / [601] but with some silt in the voids. The uppermost layer of the subsoil strata [201] usually comprised small to medium gravel in a matrix of light dirty yellow slightly silty sand and in better protected areas was overlain by a 'B' horizon [202] of mid brownish yellow silty sand with c. 30% small gravel.

7.3 *Medieval*

The evaluation trench at the west end of the site found a relict medieval cultivation soil [04] (Appleton-Fox, 2001). The groundworks for the new footing encountered a similar relict cultivation soil [206] at the outset in trench 2 (at the extreme east end of the footing - see Figs 4 and 5) where it overlay a natural 'B' horizon [201]. Soil [206] was a mid greyish-brown, slightly silty sand loam. The layer sloped slightly downwards towards the south (see top of Fig. 5). It was directly overlain by modern demolition material [207] along trench 2 and had been removed entirely from the area to the north of that trench (i.e., the northern half of the site) in the 18th century.

Soil [206] sealed an entire sequence of man-made cuts, i.e., to have developed in the medieval period. The earliest feature within this sequence of cuts on the east side of the site was a fairly steep cut [600] in the eastern arm of the new footing (Figs. 4 and 5). The bottom fill was a dirty gravel overlain by a thin layer of mid brown silty loamy soil [501] overlain by a layer of redeposited dirty medium gravel [502] capped with a loam lens [506] then loamy gravel [505] then a fill of mixed gravel and loam [504]. This was partly sealed by a lens of topsoil [603] which underlay what appeared to be a deep 'B' horizon [503] which underlay / was sealed by soil [605]. Despite the apparently natural appearance of many of these layers, any doubts as to the reality of feature [600] were dispelled when animal bone was found in fill [502]. The sequence of fills in cut [600] was truncated on the southern side by a second cut [400] or sloping erosion edge relatively early in the medieval sequence. The lowest fill investigated was a dirty loamy gravel [401] overlain to the south by cleaner loose voided buff brown gravel [300]. Fill [401] was overlain by mixed loamy gravel [503] which was sealed by soil [605].

A massive medieval cut [900] / [400]) lay in the south-east corner of the site. The bottom fills of the feature were only reached in the southern footing (trench 9 on Fig. 4) where the feature penetrated into a very heavy gravel natural [910]. The west edge of the feature was extremely sharp and vertical. The cut was overlain by a light grey brown sandy loamy [901] that had almost certainly resulted from natural silting of the adjacent topsoil. The overlying fills [902] and [903] were similar but with small lenses of redeposited sandy gravel subsoil, whilst the overlying edge fill [904] and deep central fill [905] were essentially light silty loams. Pottery recovered from fill [904] indicates that it was deposited in the 13th century. Cut [600] at the north side of the feature was probably more or less contemporary with [900] but this could not be proved.

The south-east corner of the footing was also cut through a very large pit [404] that may have been a recut of the earlier feature [900]. Part of the north edge of [404] was found in trench 5 and part of the west edge in trench 9. The feature was probably rectangular in plan and would seem to have been enormous; it probably extends out of the site to the south and east. The lowest fill along the northern edge was mixed gravel and loam [402] which became cleaner gravel [301] to the south that contained pottery dating to 13th century (and probably the first half of that century). This was overlain by a layer of fragments of red sandstone, probably quarry waste imported from the nearby area known as The Quarry. This was overlain by a thin layer of pea gravel surmounted by a trampled surface of gravel and mortar [303] that also contained 13th century pottery. This was overlain by loam [304] then loam and gravel [305] then loam [403] containing 13th century pottery then mixed loam and gravel [306] then loam [307] which also contained pottery dating to the 13th century pottery (again probably the first half of that century). This would seem to indicate that the feature was created and filled in fairly rapidly in the 13th century. The fills of cut [404] were sealed by cultivated soil horizon [406] / [308] which contained pottery dating from the 15th and 16th centuries as well as residual Saxon and early medieval sherds.

The lowest fill of the recut feature on the west edge (in trench 9 - see Fig. 4) was a layer of very large rounded gravel / cobbles [907]. These were overlain along the west edge of the feature by a build-up of silting in the form of light sandy loams [906] and then loamy layers [908] up to [911]. The overlying layer [912] was a dump of gravel overlain by clean gravel [300] then layers [302], [303] then [304] then loam [913]. The top fill, loam [914] contained pottery of 14th / 15th century date and was sealed by cultivated soil horizon [915]. This sequence was cut on the south side of the footing by a large 18th century feature [918] that was probably a construction cut.

Soil [605] was overlain by a darker, more organic soil horizon [606]. The latter continued northwards as soil [406] / [308]. A few sherds of pottery dating to the 15th / 16th centuries were recovered from soil [605] whilst the overlying soil [606] rather confusingly contained pottery dating to the 14th / ?15th centuries. This confusion was repeated locally at various other points across the footing and probably indicates intense cultivation or disturbance of the uppermost two of the three soil horizons in the full sequence. The top of soil [606] had apparently stabilised briefly as a temporary ground surface [700] before further addition of soil. This was then cut by a small bowl shaped rubbish pit [702]. This had a lower loamy fill [703] and an upper darker fill [704] which contained pottery dating to the 15th / 16th centuries. This appears to virtually mark the end of the physical build-up of soil before the site was formally developed in the 18th century.

Throughout the southern half of the site, buried soil horizons containing pottery exclusively of medieval date were encountered, except where they were truncated by cellars. All soil horizons sloped downwards towards the south and preservation was best on the southern margin of the footing where three zones could be discerned within the medieval soil with at least one post-medieval phase on top. The lowest zone was usually a pale grey brown silty sand loam that was devoid of small coal and underlying a slightly darker, more organic zone which was also coal free. This merged upwards into a mid brown silty sand loam in which there was some small coal and this in turn was overlain by an early post-medieval cultivation phase which was often quite dark or quite red from coal fire wastes.

Thus in Trench 10, on the southern side of the cellar footing [1020], the earliest pottery (dating to the 12th century) was recovered from the lowest zone of the early cultivation soil [1000]. This was overlain by relict soil [1001] then early post-medieval soil [1002]. In the soil sequence to the west of cellar [1020], soil horizon [1003] contained 13th century pottery and was cut by a bowl-shaped pit [1004], the fill of which was the same as the overlying cultivation soil [1005] which contained pottery dating to the 13th / 14th centuries. The overlying cultivation soil [1006] contained pottery dating to the 15th / 16th centuries as well as residual sherds including some possible late Saxon sherds in addition to early and high medieval sherds. Above this was a further cultivated soil horizon [1008].

The sequence seen in trench 11 could be followed through to the south-west corner of the site where the lowest part of the medieval cultivation soil [1300] was overlain by a slightly darker cultivation soil [1301] containing 15th / 16th century pottery that merged upwards into a darker cultivation horizon [1302] also containing 15th / 16th century pottery. The latter, like [1006] to the east, also contained residual sherds including possible late Saxon material in addition to early and high medieval, although here, the soil [1302] displayed a distinct reddish hue than [1006]. A thin band of stones [1303] sat on top of the ground surface represented by the top of soil [1302].

Soil [1302] was cut by a steep sided pit [1304]. The lowest fill [1307] was a very soft wet sludgy sandy silt of a type often seen in cesspits. The overlying loamy fill [1306] was a tip line down the edge of the feature and was overlain by fill [1305] which contained pottery dating to the 16th century. The feature seems to have been abandoned and the edges eroded before the final fill [1308] accumulated either within a recut or as simple stabilisation within a hollow left by the pit.

To the north in Trench 12, the medieval cultivation soil horizon [1201] was largely truncated by the construction cut [1202] for an 18th cellar [1208]. In Trench 14 to the west, the clean gravelly 'B' horizon [1407] was overlain by a badly disturbed patch of relict medieval cultivation soil [1406].

In the south-west corner of the footing, in trench 17, natural gravel [1708] was overlain by natural yellowish brown sand [1707]. Further careful hand excavation of the trench edges found that the earliest phase of the overlying medieval cultivation soil [1706] contained pottery of exclusively 13th century date.

In Trench 8, at the north-west corner of the footing, a pale grey brown medieval cultivation soil [1808] was cut by a broad but shallow scoop [1813] of unknown function. The extreme

north-west corner of the new footing cut through a part of a large sub-rectangular pit [1810] with near vertical sides. The portion within the footing was 0.8m wide and 0.6m deep and the feature must be more than 1.4m long. The base of the feature was nearly flat and the natural had been burnt and heat stained [1811]. The overlying fill was burnt gravel [1807] that contained lots of charcoal and this in turn was overlain by a dump of burnt red sand [1806]. These deposits had been deliberately sealed by a mixed yellow and pale grey silty sand [1805] with rare charcoal flecks and pebbles. Fill [1805] was sealed by dark brown sandy loam [1804] with frequent charcoal flecks and bone fragments. The few sherds of pottery recovered from soil [1804] appear to date to the 15th century. This means that pits [1810] and [1813] were earlier medieval features. Soil [1804] was in turn overlain by a dark grey sandy loam [1803] containing finds dating from the early to late post-medieval period which in turn was overlain by demolition spread [1801]. This was the local equivalent of soil / demolition spread [207]. It was cut only by a modern drain [1802] set in clean red sand.

Post-medieval

At the east end of the site was a large cesspit [204] with a steep sided and very deep cut. The upper fill (203) was a dark grey brown silty sand loam containing coal and late 17th / early 18th century pottery, tile etc whilst the lower fill (205) was a mid brown silty sand loam containing numerous fragments of 18th century roof tile and pottery.

Some 2 metres to the west of pit [204], a large deep pit [800] (not illustrated), filled with dark sandy loam [801], also contained numerous pieces of 18th century tile and pottery as well as mortar fragments, brick and other demolition materials would seem to have been another cesspit finally used as a rubbish pit. A third very large and deep cesspit pit [802] was found at the north end of Trench 11. It contained lots of 18th century pottery and roof tile in a dark loamy fill [803].

In Trench 10 cultivation soil [1008] was badly disturbed in the 18th century and overlain by strong reddish brown clayey loam [1013] with lots of mortar. This was either landfill or construction debris associated with the first formal development of the site.

Possibly 40% of the footing lies over cellars of 18th century date and the trenches bisected several cellar walls. In trench 10, the construction cut [1004] for cellar [1020] contained eastern and western brick cellar walls.

Stone surface [1303] was overlain by a thin brown soil [13??] surmounted by thin mortar surface [13??] that was probably associated with the 18th century development of the site as was wall [1010] which crossed north-south through trench 11.

In Trench 14 a layer of clean yellow sand and gravel [1405] overlay the medieval cultivation soil [1406] and was truncated by the 18th century construction cut [208]. This layer was fairly compacted and probably a rolled surface dating to the early 18th century. Surface [1405] was cut on the north side by an 18th century pit [1400] filled with dark loams [1401] and [1402]. The southern edge of pit [1400] was cut by a small shallow scoop [1404] of later 18th or early 19th date filled with dark loam [1403]. To the south, surface [1405] was cut by a large and deep 18th century cesspit [1410] filled with mixed loams [1409]. To the south, soil [1406] was continued as soil [1411] and overlain by a reddish clayey layer [1412] that resembled soil (1005) to the south. This was overlain by a layer of mixed loam and gravel

[1413] that probably dated to the early 18th century. Soil [1411] was cut by an 18th century pit [1414] filled with dark loam [1415] and an upper fill of loam [1416]. The pit (and layer [1413] above) was cut by the construction cut [1418] for a shallow east - west brick wall footing [1420] of Victorian date, whilst to the north the earlier layers were completely truncated by the construction cut [1422] for the north wall of another 18th century cellar.

In Trench 16 to the west, the late medieval and early post-medieval cultivation topsoil [1602] was overlain by early post-medieval soil horizons [1603] and [1604]. Soil [1604] was cut by the construction cut [1606] for an east-west brick wall footing [1608] of 18th century date. The overlying soil layer [1601] would appear to equate to [207] and should date to the 1950s. It contained pottery dating exclusively to late 17th / early 18th century. A modern service [1610] crossed the trench in the north half whilst a second service [1612] crossed the trench and joined [1610].

To the east, the charcoal rich medieval cultivation soil (here [1503]) was cut by a feature [1505] 1.7m wide and 0.36m deep with shallow 'curved' sloping sides. This may have been a linear feature such as a ditch running north-south or simply a broad, shallow scoop. The bottom fill was a dark reddish brown loam [1504] with charcoal flecks that was probably natural silting. It appears to have been deliberately sealed with a thick deposit of dark red clay marl [1502] that contained charcoal flecks and occasional brick fragments, so was post-medieval in date. It was similar to fill [1308] in the top of pit [1304] and would likewise appear to have been a deliberate import in the early post-medieval period, perhaps to tidy up a site containing various hollows resulting from incomplete filling of old pits. Fill [1502] was cut by the 18th century terrace cut [208] and sealed by modern disturbance [207]. This layer produced an interesting clay pipe bowl which is discussed in Appendix 1.

In the south-west corner of the site was a large cut [918] or groundworks for an 18th century cellar or wall. The cut was deliberately backfilled in the 1950s with soil and demolition materials [919] which were overlain by the 1950s concrete floor slab of the garage [920]. To the west, a 20th century salt glaze sewer service [1309] was laid on concrete in the base of a service trench cutting the top of pit [1304].

The concrete garage floor slab [604] along the frontage was at a lower level than the floor slab inside the workshop [607], the boundary between the two being marked by the south wall [608] of the garage formed from bricks in the 1950s and founded on a concrete footing. Prior to this, the truncation of cellar wall [1208] during demolition c. 1950 had left a trampled surface [1210] that was contemporary with the dumping of demolition materials and loam [1211] into the cellar whilst cellar [1020] was filled with demolition materials, mainly brick rubble [1021].

In Trench 17 further soil development led to the creation of the overlying dark grey sandy loam [1705] in the early post-medieval period with frequent charcoal flecks and occasional pebbles. The only features were a small 19th century pit [1704] 0.42m wide, 0.49m deep with steep sloping sides and a bowl shaped base filled with dark grey sandy loam [1703] with mortar and brick inclusions and a large socket [1702] filled with modern scalplings created in 2004 by the removal of an old below-ground fuel storage tank. The scalplings were overlain by demolition landfill [1701].

In the south-west corner of the site, the brick retaining wall had been removed by the demolition crew to allow for the underpinning. This revealed layers that lie below the lane adjacent to the east side of site. A deep black brown loam [609] with bricks probably represented a build-up of soil from the late 18th century onwards and was sealed below a cobbled surface [610]. This was buried below a thin build-up of very black organic loam [611] in the late 19th century which was sealed by the fairly recent tarmac road surface [612].

8 The pottery by **Stephanie Rátkai**

8.1 *The pottery from evaluation trench 1*

The pottery was examined under x20 magnification and compared to the type series set up for the Wroxeter Hinterlands Project (Rátkai, forthcoming). Those sherds which could not be matched to the type series were given a letter code and a brief description is given in the text.

Evaluation Trench 1

Context [04] Medieval ploughsoil

1 sherd in fabric 1 (12th-14th c)

3 sherds in fabric 2 (12th-14th c)

1 sherd fabric A, possibly wheelthrown, pale orange sandy fabric, external tan glaze (?14th c)

1 post-medieval sherd (?16th c)

Context [08] Upper ditch fill

10 sherds in fabric 2 (12th-14th c). 1 fabric 2 sherd has impressed ring and dot motif and is from large pitcher of 12th-early 13th century date.

1 sherd in fabric 4 (12th-14th c)

6 Malvernian cooking pot sherds (12th-13th c)

2 sandy cooking pot sherds (12th-13th c)

2 sherds in fabric A, wheelthrown (?14th c) 1 sherd may be from the same vessel as the sherd from [4]

1 sherd in fabric B, reduced unglazed, with sparse rounded iron stained quartz <0.5mm, very rare large quartz grains. (?12th-13th c)

Context [09] Lower ditch fill

1 sandy cooking pot sherd (12th-13th c)

1 Malvernian cooking pot sherd (12th-13th c)

2 fabric 2 sherds (12th-14th c)

1 ?fabric 14 sherd (13th-14th c)

1 sherd in fabric C, a clean, iron poor fabric with large rounded quartz grains and sparse, dark, glassy, sub-angular inclusions (?13th-14th c)

1 sherd in fabric 9 (13th-14th c)

Context [11] Pit fill

1 cistercian ware sherd (late 15th-mid 16th c)

1 cistercian/blackware sherd (16th c)

1 blackware sherd (later 16th c)

2 sherds ?fabric14 (13th-14th c)

1 sherd fabric 2 (12th-14th c)

1 sherd fabric 1 (12th-13th c)

Most of the sherds could be divided into known cooking pot types i.e. West Midlands sandy cooking pot and Malvernian cooking pot or iron-rich sandy glazed wares e.g. fabrics 1, 2 and 4. Iron-rich glazed wares, in varying degrees of sandiness, with oxidised surfaces and grey core, form the backbone of most Shropshire assemblages of the 12th-14th centuries. Iron-poor wares e.g. fabrics 9, C and D seem on present evidence to appear only from the later 13th century and continue in use to the 15th century.

A *terminus ante quem* in the 16th century was provided for the filling of the linear cut [10] by pottery from the fill [11] of a pit or feature cutting feature [10]. The top fills of the feature do not contain any late medieval pottery i.e. 15th century pottery such as Midlands purple ware. This strongly suggests that the process of infilling had ended before the 15th century. There was, however, very little difference between the upper and lower fills of the ditch in terms of ceramics. Both contain cooking pot sherds which could be as early as the 12th century but the presence of the iron-poor pottery in the lower fill, [9], indicates that the process of backfilling probably did not begin before the later 13th century. Unfortunately there is simply no way of knowing from the pottery how quickly the ditch was backfilled but the small sherd size and signs of abrasion suggest that the fill material was derived from the surrounding ground surface rather than being comprised of ‘primary deposition’ rubbish which would generally be composed of larger more complete pots with an admixture of smaller sherds.

8.2 *The pottery from the 2004 watching brief*

A series of infill layers produced a small amount of pottery. The medieval sherds were examined under x 20 magnification and divided into fabrics and matched to the type series used for several recently excavated sites in Shrewsbury, including, Water Lane, Frankwell and St Julian’s Friars. The post-medieval pottery was divided into ware groups. The pottery was recorded by sherd weight and count, minimum rim count and rim percentage (eves). Vessel form, decoration and glaze were also recorded. Each context was spot-dated. The assemblage consisted of 122 medieval and post-medieval sherds, weighing 1280g (Tables A and B). The small assemblage size rendered detailed statistical analysis unreliable. The pottery data were therefore examined with a view to establishing the date range of the pottery present, to expand details of the fabric-form series and to test the validity of the fabric chronology established at St Julian’s Friars.

In addition to the pottery, a sherd from a post-medieval glass bottle and a complete clay pipe bowl (see Higgins below – Appendix 1) were recorded from (207) where they were found with a residual copper green glazed whiteware sherd (fabric K01) and the rim of a blackware chamber pot.

Three new fabrics were identified Bd4, Ca7.2 and Cd2.1:

Fabric Bd4 Lid-seated cooking pot/jar rim. Brown surfaces, dark blue-grey core and margins. Hard-fired, wheel-thrown with: sparse ill-sorted, rounded quartz up to 0.25mm, sparse organics up to 1mm, sparse red or brown iron oxide up to 2mm, sparse mica flecks. 14th-15th c?

Fabric Ca7.2 Small undiagnostic body sherd. Sparse angular milky quartz c 1mm, sparse sub-angular brown sandstone up to 4mm, sparse iron oxide or ?grog up to 1mm. The single sherd in this fabric is very small. It is hard fired and reduced grey apart from brown-grey surfaces. The sherd has an extremely hackly fracture. The range of inclusions is very different from the other fabrics and there is a strong possibility that this sherd is not medieval and may be prehistoric, although if so it is unusually hard-fired..

Fabric Cd2.1 Cooking pot base-body sherd. Moderate sub-rounded quartz 0.5-1mm, sparse iron oxide 0.25-0.5mm, sparse organics. Hard-fired, hand made and with a hackly fracture. Grey throughout, apart from brownish ext surface. 12th-13th c?

The earliest pottery from the assemblage was Stafford ware and possible Stafford ware. This was found mainly in Trenches 10 and 13 but one sherd was found in Trench 4. Stafford ware sherds have been found in a number of locations in Shrewsbury. Their presence at several locations within the historic core of Shrewsbury suggests that pottery use in the late Saxon period must have common and widespread.

There is some difficulty in establishing what pottery was in use once Stafford ware ceased to be produced, which is compounded by the fact that there is, to date, no firm evidence for the date of the end of the industry. However, one of the earliest post-Conquest pottery types in use in Shropshire was Worcester type sandy cooking pots. Sherds of this ware were found in Trenches 3, 4 10 and 12. Malvernian cooking pot sherds, imported into Shrewsbury along the River Severn, are a common find in the town. The greater number of these date to the 13th century, the period of greatest distribution of this ware in the west Midlands. However, a Malvernian rim sherd from (1000) is of 12th century type. This small piece of evidence is of great interest, since it demonstrates that there was some long distance trade in Malvernian products as early as the 12th century.

Early pottery (i.e. post-Conquest-c 1250) was completely absent from Trench 2, where the pottery indicated post-medieval activity of late 17th-early 18th century date. Early wares were not present in Trenches 6, 7 and 18 but so little pottery was found in them that this may be of no significance. In contrast, Trench 3 contained pottery which suggested activity only in the 13th century.

Pitcher sherds (the earliest glazed ware) were found in fabrics Ca3, Ca7.1, Cb2 and Cb2.1 confirming the proposed early date for these fabrics. Pitcher sherds were present in contexts (301), (406), (904) and (1302).

The assemblage contained pottery of a type found elsewhere in Shrewsbury and contained nothing which would contradict the proposed dating suggested for the fabrics at St Julian's Friars. The most intriguing sherd was in new fabric Ca7.2 which could possibly be prehistoric. Previous archaeological work at the Town Walls Garage (TWGS 01a) indicated that the process of infilling belonged to the 13th and 14th centuries, although earlier pottery was present residually. There appeared to be an absence of 15th -16th century material apart from within a pit cutting the backfilling. There was therefore a contrast between the two sites since although there appear to be episodes of 13th and 14th century infilling, in TWGS 04, this appears to have continued through into the post-medieval period.

8.3 *Spot Dating*

203	late 17 th -early 18 th c
207	late 17 th -early 18 th c
209	late 17 th -early 18 th c
301	13 th c (probably first half of 13 th c)
303	13 th c
307	13 th c (probably first half of 13 th c)
403	13 th c
406	15 th -16 th c (residual late Saxon and early medieval sherds)
605	15 th -16 th c
606	14 th c (?15 th)
704	15 th -16 th c
904	13 th c
914	14 th -15 th c
1000	12 th c
1003	13 th c
1005	13 th -14 th c
1006	15 th -16 th c (residual early and high medieval sherds)
1301	15 th -16 th c
1302	15 th -16 th c (residual late Saxon?, early and high medieval sherds)
1305	16 th c
1706	13 th c
1804	?15 th c

Fabric	203	207	209	301	303	307	403	406	605	606	704	904	914	1000	1003	1005	1006	1301	1302	1305	1706	1804	Total
Aa1								1									1	1					3
Aa2																				1			1
Ab1								1										1		1			3
Ab1.2									1								1						2
Bb2				1	3			1					1		2		1	2	3				14
Bc3													1										1
Bd1										1													1
Bd2																		1					1
Bd4										1													1
Ca1											1						1	1	1				4
Ca2																		1				1	2
Ca3				1		1		2									2	1	7		1		15
Ca5																			1				1
Ca7					1																		1
Ca7.1				2													1	1	1				5
Ca7.2																		1					1
Cb1																			1				1
Cb2												2								1			3
Cb2.1				1	2												1		3				7
Cb4																1							1
Cb4.1																1	1						2
Cb5.1													1										1
Cb8							1								2			4					7
Cd2.1				1																			1
K01		1																					1
Malvernian cp							1					1		1	1		1	2	3				10
Midlands Purple											1												1
Stafford ware								1						2	1	1		1					6
Stafford ware?																			2				2
Worcester cp				1	6	1		1								1	1	1					12
Worcester glazed						1																	1
Blackware		1																					1
Mottled ware			1																				1
Slip-coated ware	2		4																				6
Trailed slipware	2																						2
Total	4	4	5	7	12	3	2	7	1	2	2	3	3	3	6	4	11	18	23	2	1	1	122

Table A: Quantification of pottery by sherd count by context

Fabric	203	207	209	301	303	307	403	406	605	606	704	904	914	1000	1003	1005	1006	1301	1302	1305	1706	1804	Total	
Aa1								2									2	3					7	
Aa2																				4			4	
Ab1								7										1		4			12	
Ab1.2									4								2						6	
Bb2				1	5			3					32		2		2	9	6				60	
Bc3													64										64	
Bd1										8													8	
Bd2																		2					2	
Bd4										17													17	
Ca1											24						13	4	5				46	
Ca2																		4				3	7	
Ca3				4		3		31									5	1	43		8		95	
Ca5																			3				3	
Ca7						3																	3	
Ca7.1				28													5	7	1				41	
Ca7.2																		1					1	
Cb1																			4				4	
Cb2												12											2	14
Cb2.1				5	7												1		10				23	
Cb4																11							11	
Cb4.1																35	10						45	
Cb5.1												6											6	
Cb8							15								23			24					62	
Cd2.1				14																			14	
K01		2																					2	
Malvernian cp							11					4		11	1		3	9	15				54	
Midlands Purple											44												44	
Stafford ware?																				1			1	
Stafford ware								2						8	14	1		3					28	
Worcester cp				2	20	26		8								10	4	14					84	
Worcester glazed						12																	12	
Blackware		13																					13	
Mottled ware			4																				4	
Slip-coated ware	11		456																				467	
Trailed slipware	18																						18	
Total	29	15	460	54	35	41	26	53	4	25	68	16	102	19	40	57	47	82	90	8	8	3	1282	

Table B: Quantification of pottery by sherd weight by context

9 The animal bones *by Ian L Baxter*

This is a tiny assemblage of animal bones amounting to 116 fragments of which 40 could be identified to species or a broader taxonomic category. A full list of identifications is given in Appendix 1.

All the main domestic species, i.e. cattle, sheep/goat and pig, are present throughout the stratigraphic sequence. Horse was only present in post-medieval context (209). No human remains were present amongst the assemblage.

10 Discussion

The site features a deep sequence of medieval cultivation soil horizons in the form of recognizable 'Ap1', Ap2' and 'Ap3' horizons (Avery, 1984) along the southern margin of the footing in areas that were not cellared. Preservation probably increases towards the road and archaeological deposits almost certainly survive at depth between the new building and the road.

The discovery of residual late Saxon pottery from within the buried soil profile is interesting. There was a moderate amount of hand digging of the earlier components to recover finds. These appear not to contain late Saxon material that instead lies in higher layers. This implies that the Saxon material was imported onto site. The same may be true of the prehistoric pottery.

A large, undated but early feature [600] in the south-east corner of the site appears to have been used for quarrying gravel; it stopped on top of the red sand. The fills appear to have been a mixture of soils and gravel dumps and the feature was recut. Following this, the area regenerated a soil profile comprising 'B' horizon [503] and a thin soil [605], possibly not a lengthy affair in sandy gravelly subsoil. This appears to have been recut as a large rectangular feature occupying much if not all of the south-east corner of the site. Indeed the feature may even have extended out of the site. The feature had a very regular, vertical edge on the west side and may have been structural in some form (e.g. a medieval cellar). Unfortunately, the relatively small area of the feature that was excavated did not produce sufficient information to identify the feature better.

Elsewhere, other medieval pits (400/404/900, 704, 1004, 1304, see Fig. 3) were dug and pit digging activity continued through the early post-medieval period along with cultivation of the soils. It should be stressed that the actual area of the ground works actually represents less than 10% of the total area of the site. The number of pits found would seem to indicate that the site formed part of a formal settlement area and would not be inconsistent with medieval backplot activity. Unfortunately, it would not be possible to say, on the available spatial analysis, which street frontage owned the plot or burgage. It is most likely to have been a property on Town Walls or Swan Hill (formerly Murivance - see Baker 2001). The historic map evidence suggests it is unlikely to have been Milk Street to the east but it could have been part of an early version of Swan Hill Court to the north (Baker, 2001, Fig. 4, map 4). The presence of the large scoop [600] and later replacements (400/404/900) should, however be borne in mind as being possibly elements of some form of structure in which case all the medieval features relate to medieval occupation on the Town Walls frontage

within the plot. If true, much of the physical evidence for this occupation probably survives intact and unseen along the street frontage.

The analysis of the bone recovered (Baxter above) shows that there was no human burial within the area of the site. No graves were seen anywhere during the groundworks. If present, some would surely have been visible along the margins of the northern arm of the footing.

The evaluation confirmed one of the main findings of the desk based assessment in that this area was not built up prior to the 19th century. The sequence of soil horizons with their scattering of medieval pottery was entirely consistent with agricultural or horticultural use of the area during the medieval period. However, this use was clearly not the exclusive use, as the various pits indicate other intermittent activity, implying a built-up environment (whether domestic or industrial) in the near vicinity.

The linear cut [10] in evaluation trench 1 was interesting. It appeared to be a ditch running parallel to (and inside of) the town wall which lies some 15m to the south below the pavement on the southern side of Town Walls. Whilst linear cut [10] was broad it did not have the profile of a defensive ditch. The land rises quite steeply to the north, perhaps this is a drainage ditch to prevent the run off from the hill undermining the wall. Another possibility is that the ditch was a boundary marker, though the position so close to the wall would appear to argue against this being the case.

There was no trace of any burials such as those reported by Leighton in 1887. The evaluation concluded that the documentary evidence suggests that these were sited slightly further to the east under the present garage building. No graves were seen cutting the subsoil to either side of trench ?2. More importantly, there was no human bone in the bone assemblage and the site would appear to have been under cultivation throughout the medieval period. The notion that there was a burial ground here can be discounted.

The archaeological works have, however, revealed that there is good survival of medieval and later archaeology on the site and that the present development has not removed a large percentage of this resource. If any further development of the site is proposed further archaeological work, preferably as a formal excavation, is likely to increase significantly an understanding of this area and perhaps to assist in the definition of individual properties within the area.

11 References

Appleton-Fox, N, 2001 *Town Walls Garage, Town Walls, Shrewsbury, Shropshire. A report on an Archaeological Evaluation*. Marches Archaeology Series **194**, July 2001

Avery, BW, 1980, *Soil Classification for England and Wales [Higher Categories]*. Harpenden - Soil Survey of England and Wales.

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Leighton, W A, *The Shrewsbury of Past Ages, No. 2* Transactions of the Shropshire Archaeological and Natural History Society, 11 part 1, 1887.

Mini.Soil.Surveys (Ches & Staffs) Ltd, 2004. Borehole Logs for 4 boreholes on site. Job No. CAS 04568 (June 2004).

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12 The archive

The archive will be deposited at the Shropshire Sites and Monuments Record, Shire Hall, Shrewsbury. It consists of:

- TWGS01A Report (MAS 194)
- Copy of desk based study (Nigel Baker, 2001)
- 17 context index sheets
- 17 trench recording sheets
- 1 list of levels
- 4 photo index sheets
- 2 film black and white negatives
- 2 film of colour slides
- 5 sheets of field drawings
- 0 sheet of inked drawings
- 23 finds recording sheet
- 1 pottery report
- 1 box of finds

The Site Code was TWGS04. The archive is currently lodged at the offices of Marches Archaeology awaiting transfer to an appropriate repository

Appendix 1 A Clay Tobacco Pipe from the Town Wall Garage *Dr D A Higgins*

A pipe bowl recovered from Context 207 (Fig 1) was a Shropshire product with a distinctive tailed heel. The bowl is characteristic of the local pipemaking industry from c1680-1730. The bowl is made of coarse off-white firing clay, almost certainly obtained locally from one of the Shropshire coal-fields, and it has a stem bore of 7/64". This local clay gives quite a rugged fracture and it has numerous small inclusions in it, which are clearly visible with a lens. The heel and rim are slightly chipped (omitted for clarity in the drawing) but the rim has clearly been bottered (i.e. smoothed and shaped by twisting a finishing tool in it). The rim has also been fully encompassed with a band of finely serrated milling. The pipe has a good form and the surface has been finely burnished, apart from a short section at the bowl / stem junction. This gap is quite unusual but may be characteristic of this maker's products, since a similar gap has been noted on another example from Shrewsbury (see below). There are two distinctive mould flaws on the left hand side of the heel, comprising one quite sharply defined mark in the centre, where the heel joins the bowl, and a less well-defined ridge, which runs parallel with the bottom of the heel. Despite these flaws, the bowl is well produced and finished and represents a good quality pipe of the period. The heel itself is stamped with a neatly executed three-line mark giving the makers name, 'IOHN / ROB / ERTS'. Very little work has been done on this maker in recent years and so this discovery has provided an opportunity to re-assess where and when he was working and the nature of his workshop and production.

John Roberts has been known as a pipemaker from his marks since at least 1862, when R. Thursfield published a transcription of this three-line mark in *The Reliquary* (Thursfield 1862). T. H. Thursfield further refined what was known about this maker when he identified at least four different styles of mark used by John Roberts, three with the name in two lines and one with it in three (Thursfield 1907, Plate 5, 280-283). Oswald and James included this name in their list of Broseley pipemakers and cited examples of his pipes in the British Museum, Chester Museum, Shrewsbury Museum and from Broseley in Shropshire and from Brewood in Staffordshire (Oswald & James 1955, 225). Atkinson also includes this maker in his Broseley list and repeats Oswald and James' dates of 1637-1683 for this maker (Atkinson 1975, 75). It is interesting to note, however, that Atkinson only records the three-line name mark for this maker and not the two-line variety, which was represented by three different variants by Thursfield in 1907. Both Oswald and James and Atkinson also attribute IR initial stamps to this maker but the provenances they give are not very local to Broseley and it seems more likely that these belong to a different maker. In summary, the published literature suggests that John Roberts was a Broseley maker who was born there in 1637, who died there in 1683 and who used at least four different varieties of full-name marks.

The attribution of Roberts as a Broseley maker was, however, questioned by this author in 1987, since another member of the Roberts family is known to have worked in Much Wenlock and a John Roberts is recorded as a pipemaker there in 1678 (Higgins 1987, 479). The Broseley Parish Register entries do give an occupation for the John Roberts buried at Broseley and, in any case, a burial of 1683 seems very early for this style of mark, which was only just being introduced at this date. In order to try and find further details of the Much Wenlock maker of this name, a search of the IGI Internet site was carried out in November 2004. This showed that the name John Roberts was extremely common in this area, with no less than 905 references being found in a search of Shropshire from 1620-1740, some 7 of which are from Much Wenlock itself. This shows how important it is to have supporting evidence, especially an occupation, before linking a marked pipe with a documentary source.

The IGI does not give occupations, but there are references to a John Roberts in Much Wenlock at the right period to match the documented maker there. A John, son of John and Alice Roberts was baptised at Much Wenlock on 8 January 1652, which would be the right period for a maker known to have been working in the late 1670s. A John Robberts (sic) married a Joyce Deacon at Much Wenlock on 4 February 1678 and their marriage bond in Hereford Record Office dated 10 February 1678 gives John's occupation as a pipemaker. John and Joyce baptised a son at Much Wenlock, also called John, on 16 December 1680 and another son, Richard, on 29 March 1654 (born 1 March 1654). Later references include John, son of John and Elizabeth Roberts, who was baptised at Much Wenlock on 8 October 1690, a John, son of John and Margaret who was baptised on 5 January 1732 and a John, son of John and Mary who was baptised on 13 January 1732. These references make it clear that there were several individuals called John Roberts in the town and that there were at least two adults of the same name in Much Wenlock in 1732. These people may well all have been related, as is made clear by the 1716 will of Richard Roberts of Much Wenlock, tobacco pipe maker, in Hereford Record Office. This will includes, *'Item. I give to my brother John Roberts one shilling and to my cousin John Roberts his son the sum of one shilling'*.

The date of the pipe marks suggests a working period of c1680-1730 for the pipemaker called John Roberts, which would fit perfectly with the likely working period for the John who married in 1678. It is also interesting to note that this John married Joyce Deacon and that the Deacons were the most prominent pipemaking family in Much Wenlock during this period. George Deakin was recorded as a pipemaker in 1640, the earliest reference to a pipemaker in the area, and at least four other members of the family went on to become pipemakers during the second half of the century (Higgins 1987, 505-6). On the present evidence, it would seem most likely that the pipemaker John Roberts was born in Much Wenlock in 1652, that he married into the Deacon family in 1678 and that he had a son called John in 1680, when he would have been 28. His working life would have taken him well into the eighteenth century, when his son John could have carried on the family business. John Senior was also the brother of the pipemaker Richard Roberts, as is shown by the provisions in Richard's will, which also shows that John Senior was still alive at the end of 1716. There are also Thomas Roberts marks known from the area, suggesting that a third member of the family may have worked there as well. This suggested arrangement of the family fits the documentary evidence extremely well and covers exactly the right period for the style of the marked pipes. From this it can be seen that the Broseley individual previously given as the pipemaker can be discounted, since he is merely one of many individuals in the area sharing the same name.

Turning to the marks themselves, it is worth noting that the dies are very finely cut, with small, neatly formed serif lettering. These dies are of a much finer quality than could be produced by the pipemaker himself and they must have been specially commissioned from a skilled jeweller or engraver. Looking through the cast impressions of pipe marks from the National Catalogue that is being compiled by the author, it has been possible to find seven other examples of three-line John Roberts marks with which to compare the new find from Shrewsbury.

It is not clear exactly what happened to the original mark described by R Thursfield in 1862 although this piece may have ended up in the Bragge Collection in the British Museum. The Bragge collection certainly contains an example found in Much Wenlock with a very similar

mark to the new Shrewsbury find, except that the 'R' appears to have a slightly longer tail, almost touching the horizontal dividing bar. The T. H. Thursfield collection was broken up, with sections ending up with the Ironbridge Gorge Museum Trust and in Rowley's House Museum, Shrewsbury. Unfortunately, none of the various Roberts marks he described seems to have survived but the Rowleys House Museum does hold a damaged three line John Roberts mark from the Queen Anne House excavations at Shrewsbury Abbey. This piece is too fragmentary to be able to identify whether the die is the same as either of the others or not. Another example from a private collection, but found in fields near Shrewsbury, can be seen to represent another die since the 'H' and 'N' have small serifs that don't touch, while the 'E' has an unusually large and upward projecting serif to its lowest horizontal. In contrast, an unprovenanced example in the Grosvenor Museum, Chester, has a very large mark, about 9mm in height and 8.5mm wide, with sharply square corners and large, well-cut lettering with the top serifs of the 'H' and 'N' touching. This piece was illustrated by Rutter and Davey in 1980 (Page 122, Fig 84) and it may be the same die as an example found at Willaston in Cheshire and now in the National Clay Tobacco Pipe Archive, which is currently housed at the University of Liverpool. An example from Much Wenlock in the author's possession has all three of the lower 'H' and 'N' serifs touching and there is another example from the same place, but too battered to allow detailed identification. The four examples described above that can be identified to die type are all different from the new Shrewsbury find, which has the smallest frame yet recorded for this type of mark (about 7.5mm square) and relatively thin lettering without pronounced serifs (Fig 1).

This makes a total of at least five different dies represented amongst the eight examples compared. This is a very high number, especially since each of these dies would have had to be specially commissioned, and it suggests that many more variants are likely to exist in a larger sample. In other areas of the country working dies appear to have been made of clay from a single master, thus reducing the necessity for producing so many expensive originals. The use of multiple individually engraved dies of the same form at this period is a new observation and it will be interesting to see whether this method is peculiar to Roberts or whether it was a general characteristic of the Much Wenlock area manufacturers. The reason for having so many dies would have been to allow different journeymen employed at the workshop to each mark pipes with the master pipemaker's name. Even if they were not all in use at one the same time (i.e., some were replacements as marks became worn or lost) this suggests that Roberts was a well-established manufacturer, able to employ a number of journeymen in his manufactory. The good quality of the bowl form and finish matches that of the marks and supports the suggestion that Roberts was operating one of the better quality workshops in the area.

One point to note with regard to the quality and finish of his products is the gap between the stem and bowl burnishing noted above. These two sections of the pipe would have been individually burnished using a glass or agate rod. The two sections usually join or overlap so that a glossy surface is created all over the pipe. The privately owned example from Shrewsbury also exhibits this gap between the stem and bowl burnishing, suggesting that leaving this gap was a recurrent feature of Roberts' pipes. This may have been no more than the product of the way that an individual finisher burnished the pipes but, as such, it might suggest that the same person finished both of these pipes from Shrewsbury.

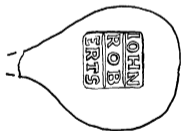
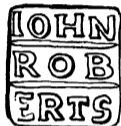
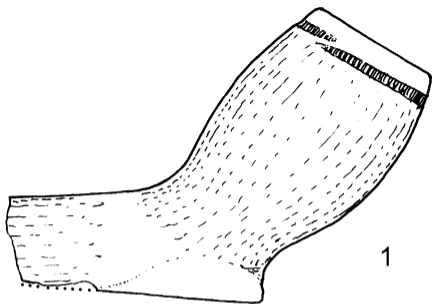
In terms of his marketing and distribution, it is interesting to note that the provenanced examples of Roberts' pipes tend to come mainly from Much Wenlock itself or from areas to

the north of the town. The various references given above include three examples from Shrewsbury and one each from Chester, Willaston (Cheshire) and Brewood (Staffordshire). In contrast, only one is recorded from the Broseley area and there are none from amongst the extensive collections from the Birmingham area, where several other Much Wenlock makers are well represented. Having said that, the Chester and Willaston samples are extremely large (several thousands of marks), so that the single examples noted represent only a very small trade to these areas. Nevertheless, their presence shows that some of Roberts' products were travelling 50-60 miles from their place of manufacture and it may be that he had trading connections to the north while other Much Wenlock makers concentrated on trade to the south and east.

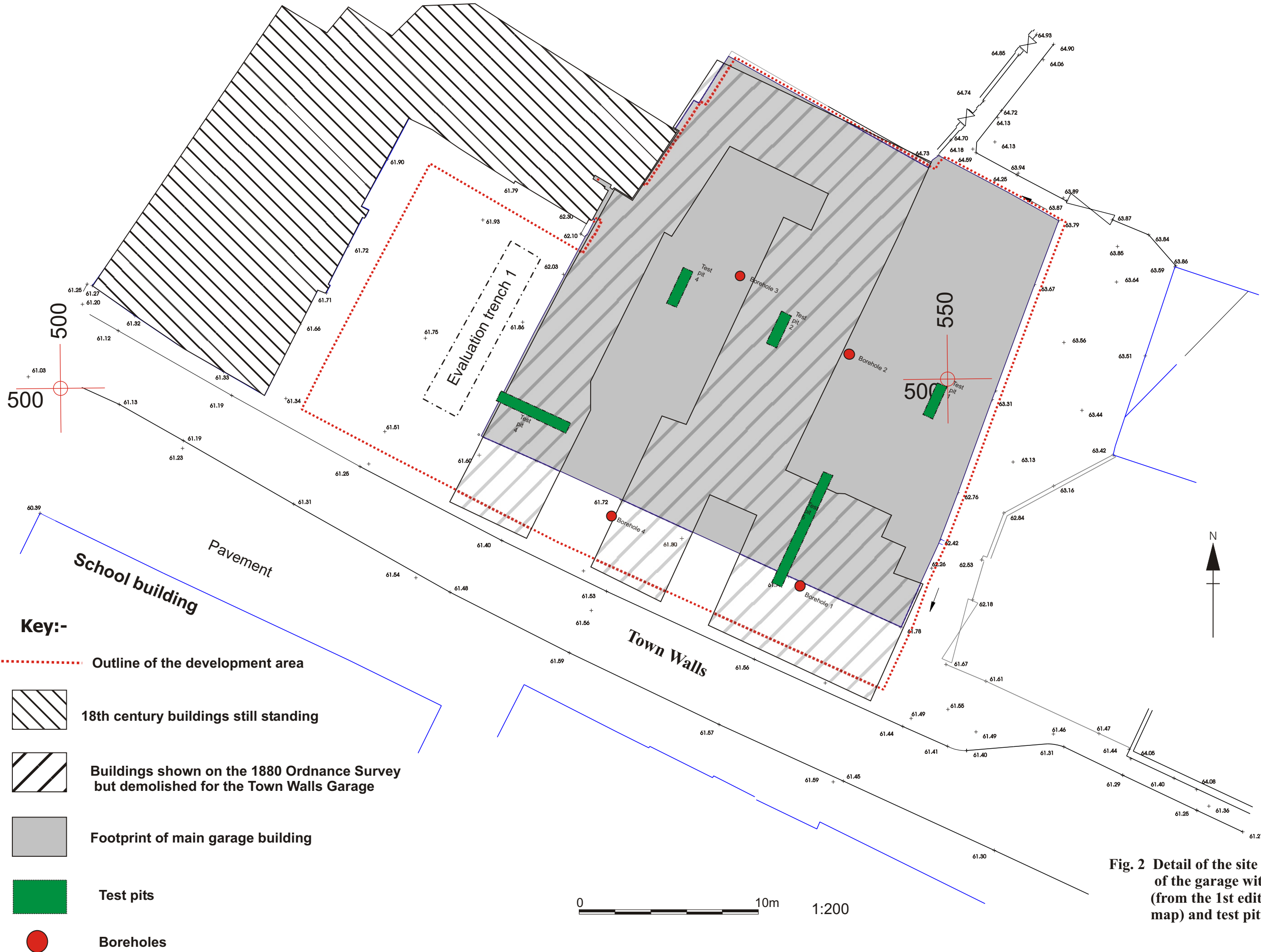
Although the excavations only produced a single marked pipe, this has provided an opportunity to re-assess the evidence for this particular maker. This study has shown that the John Roberts marks previously attributed to a Broseley manufacturer should, in fact, have been identified as Much Wenlock products. John Roberts was almost certainly born there in 1652 and married into the well-established Deacon pipemaking family in 1678. The Roberts family appear to have become prominent Much Wenlock pipemakers by the end of the seventeenth century. His brother Richard died in 1716, leaving an estate valued at £79 11s 8d and pipe marks of Thomas Roberts, presumably another relation, are also known from the area. The pipes John produced can be seen to have been of a very good quality while the large number of finely engraved dies (at least three two-line examples and five three-line examples) indicates that he employed a number of workers in his manufactory. Provenanced finds show that his products sometimes travelled as much as 50-60 miles from his workshop and the early indications are that he may have specialised in trade to the north of Much Wenlock. Further examples are clearly needed to explore his range of products, the individual dies that he used and his marketing patterns in more detail.

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John Roberts pipe bowl of c1680-1730 from Shrewsbury at 1:1 with stamp detail at 2:1.



Key:-



- Edge of development area
- Buildings on 1880 Ordnance Survey since demolished
- Late 18th century wall footings and other disturbance and obstructions seen in trenches or detected on demolition surface
- Footings dug to natural
- Medieval features

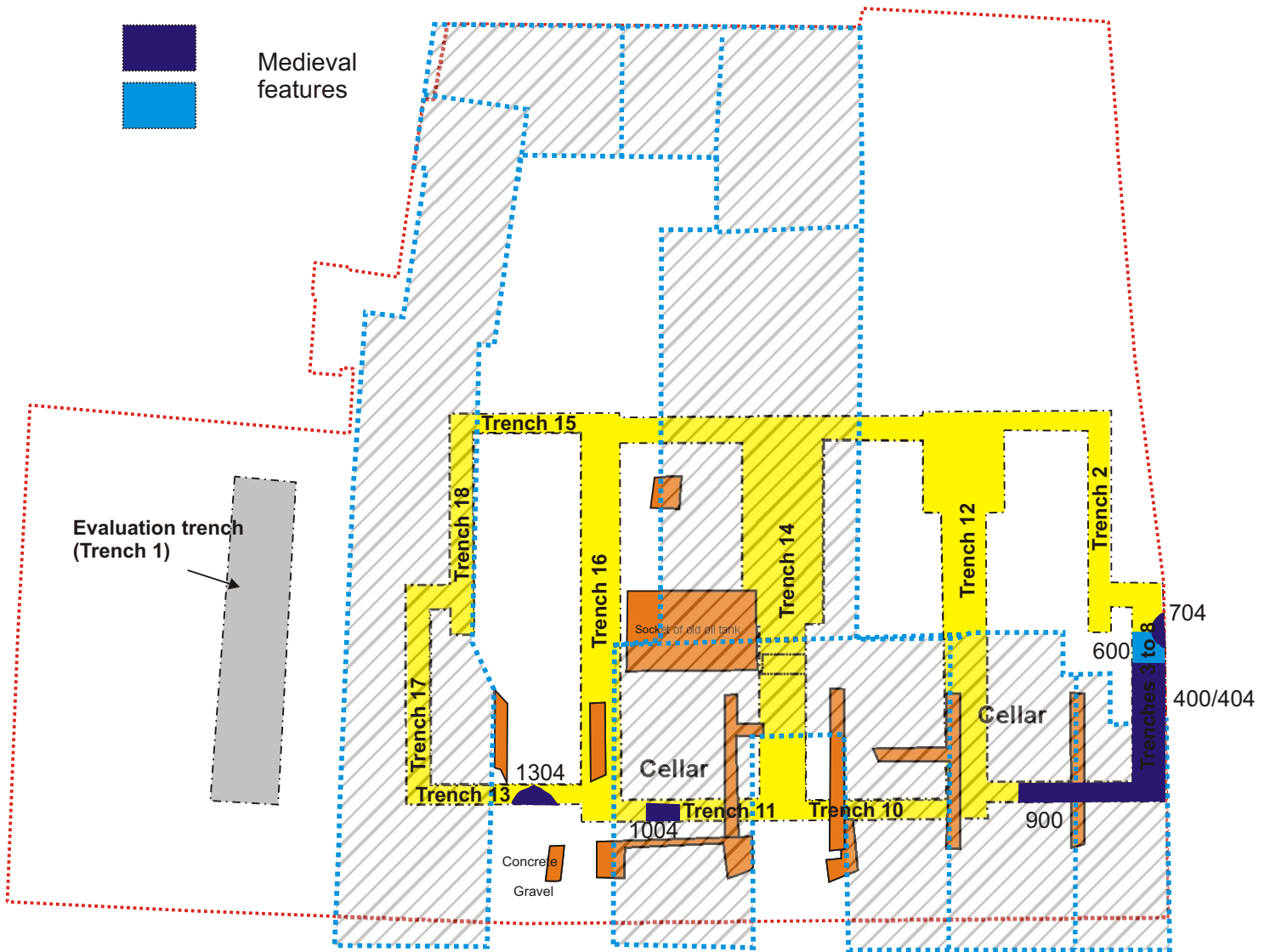


Fig. 3 Location of the trenches showing principal medieval features and details of old wall footings and other disturbance

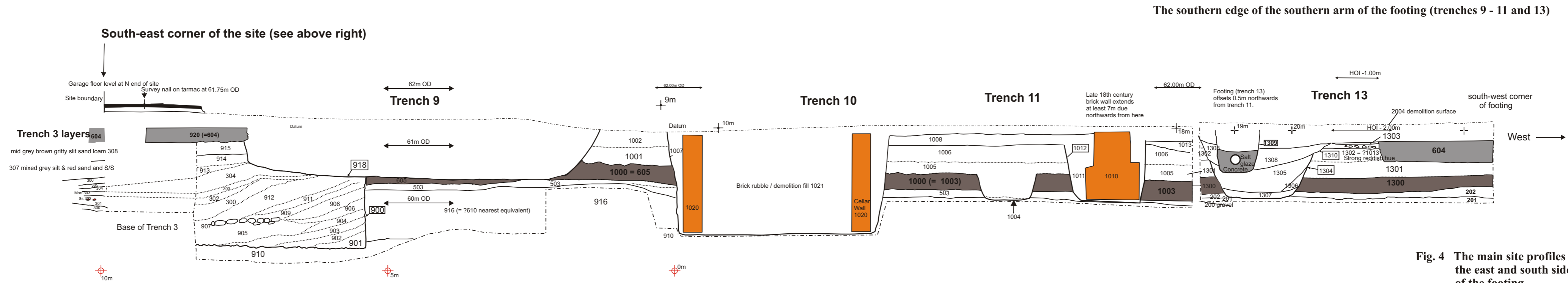
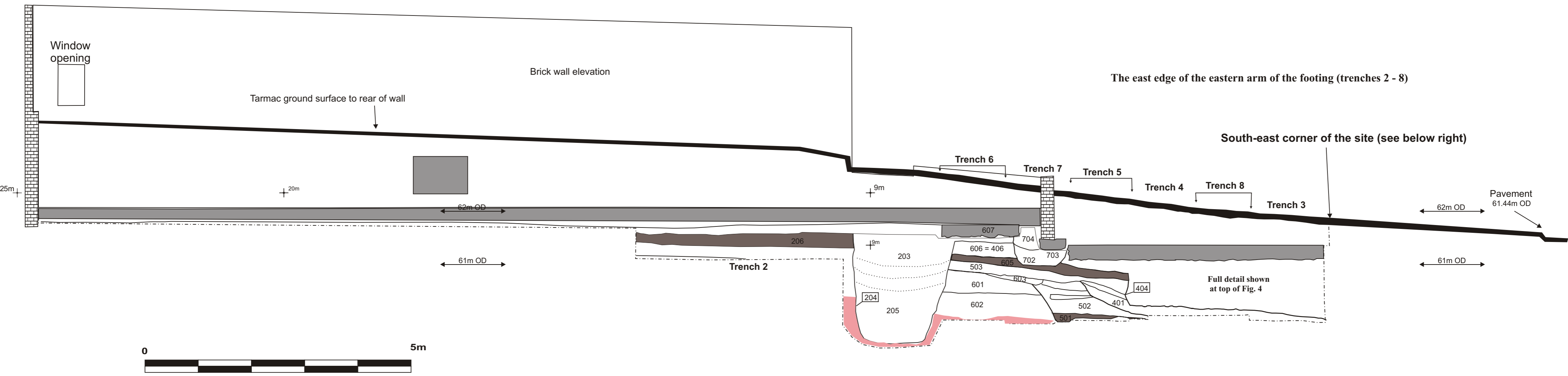
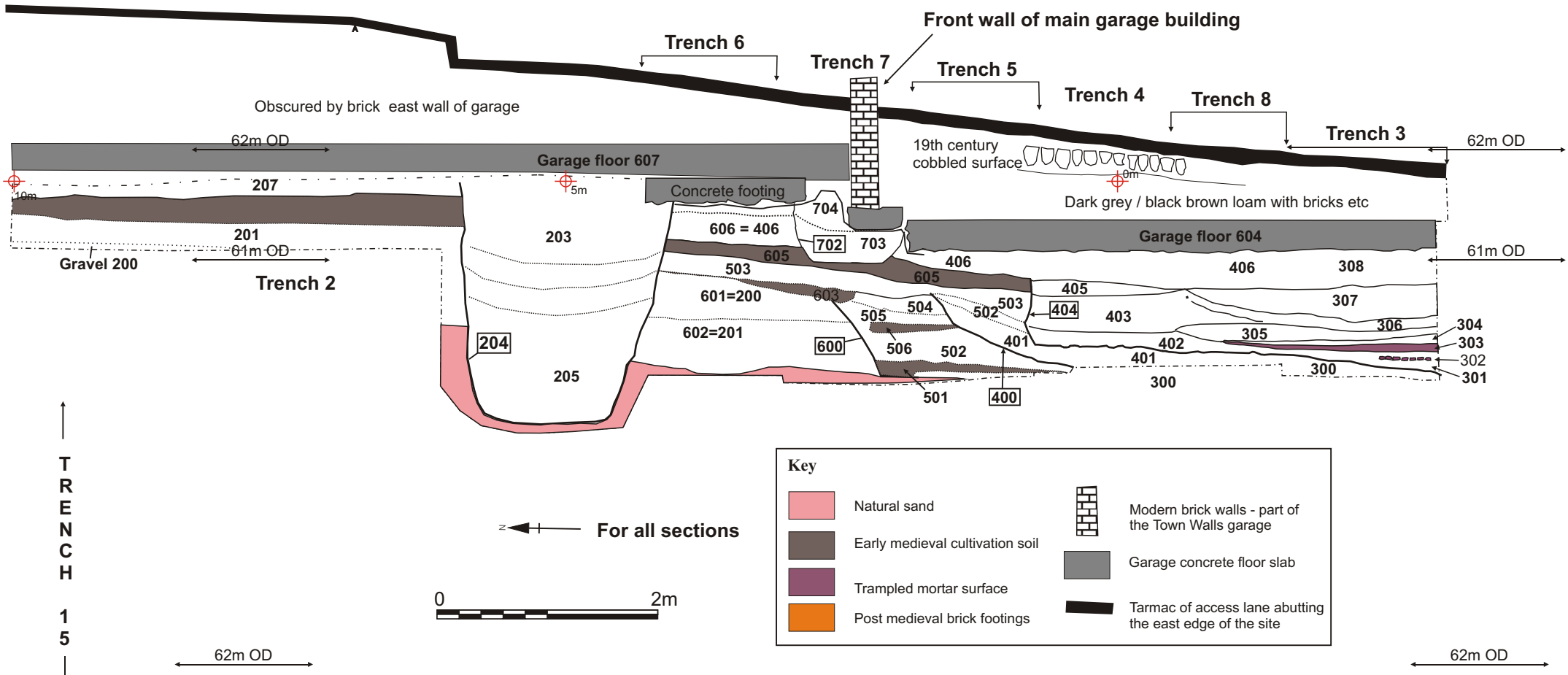
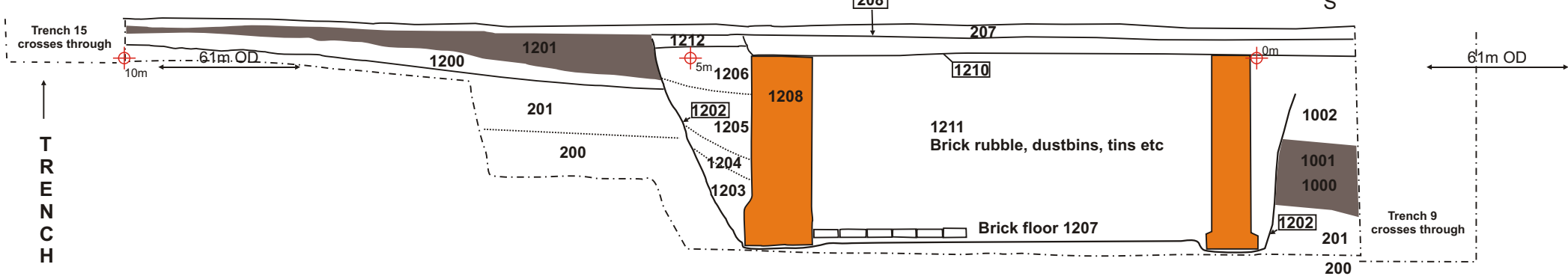


Fig. 4 The main site profiles on the east and south sides of the footing

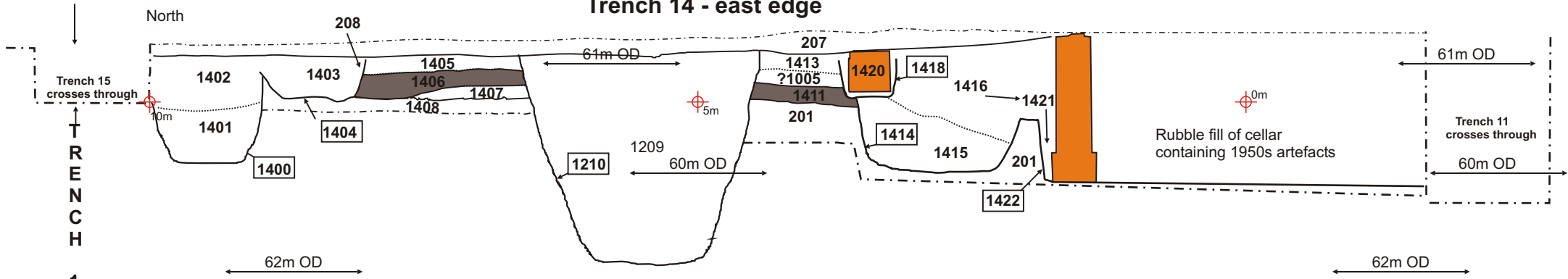
Trenches 2 - 8 east edge



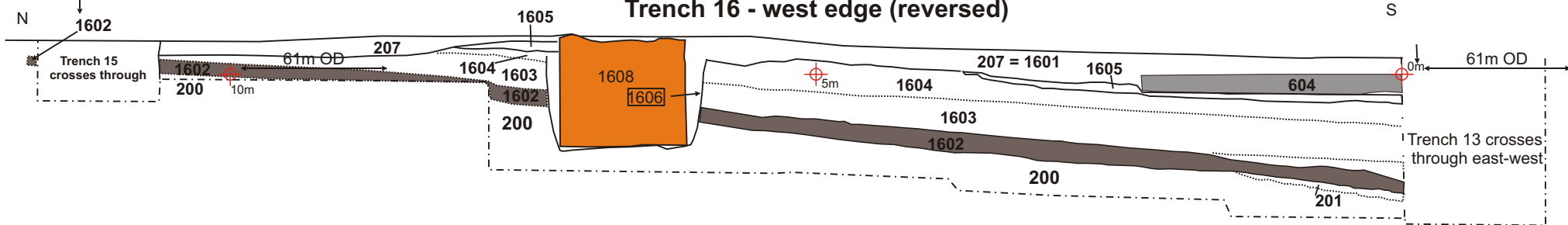
Trench 12 east edge



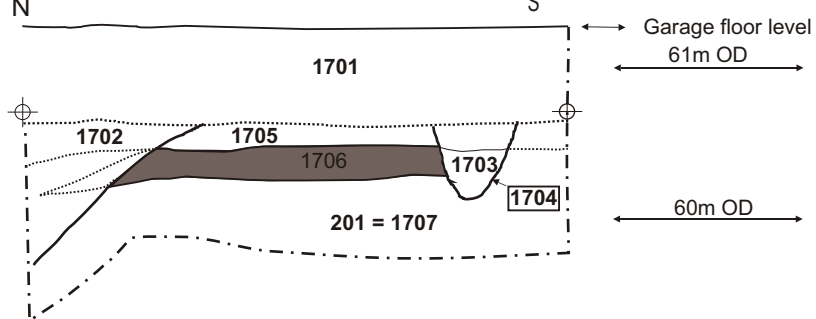
Trench 14 - east edge



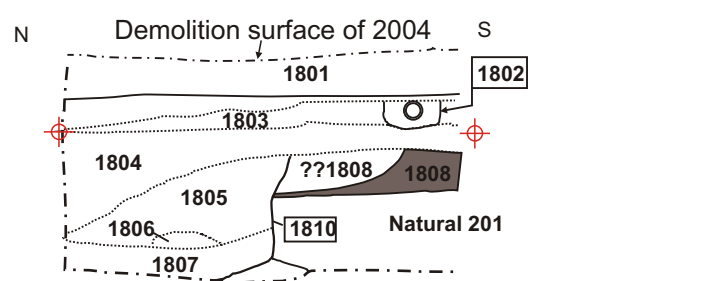
Trench 16 - west edge (reversed)



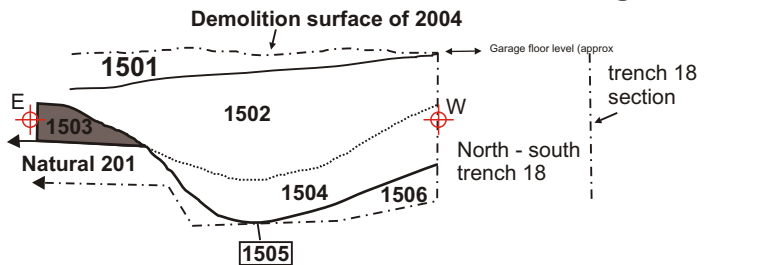
Trench 17 - east trench edge



Trench 18 - north end of west trench edge (reversed)



Trench 15 - west end of south trench edge



Trench 1 - west edge (reversed)

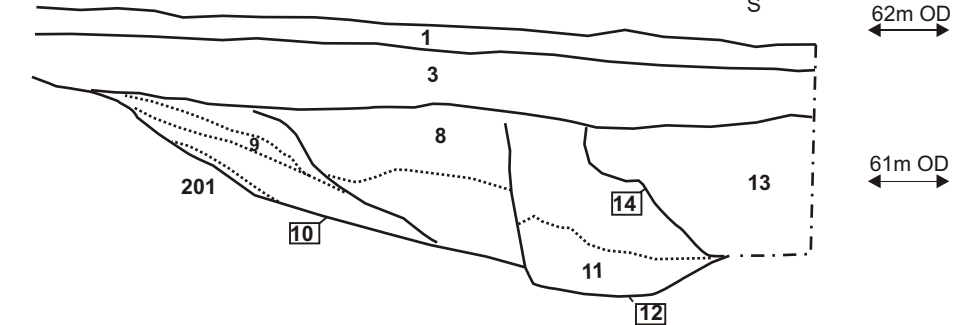


Fig. 5 Trench sections laid out in correct geographical order (westwards down the page)