

Marches Archaeology

Land at the junction of Cross Street and Friars Street Hereford

SMR: HSM 43221

Report on an Archaeological Evaluation

February 2006

Marches Archaeology Series 408

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Land at the junction of Cross Street and Friars Street Hereford

A report on an Archaeological Evaluation

NGR: SO 5055 4005

SMR: HSM 43221

Report by
Francesca Bradley

Contribution by Jo Wainwright
Historical background by Nick Tavener

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February 2006

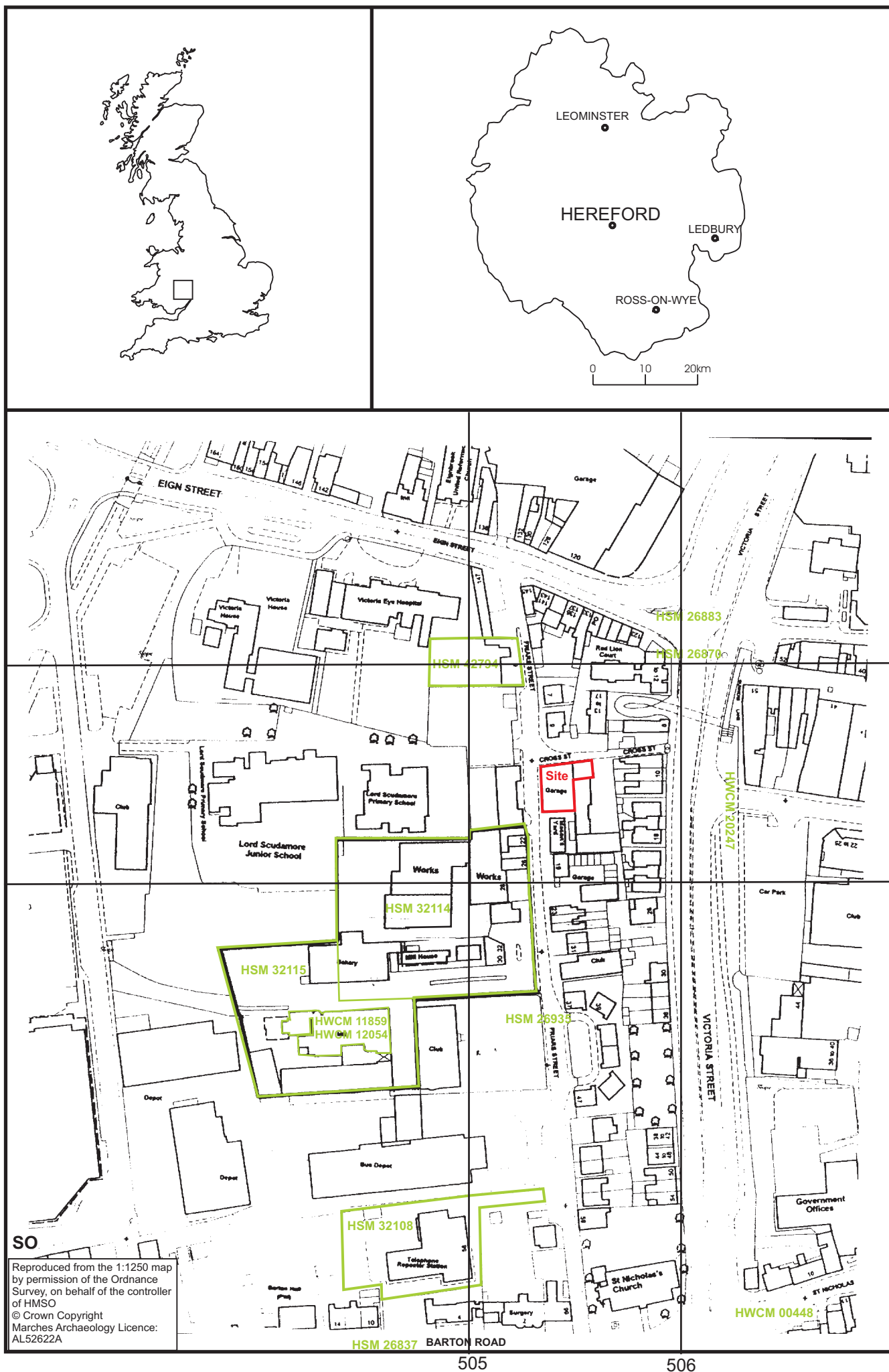
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Summary

The excavation of a small evaluation trench at the junction of Cross Street and Friars Street, Hereford uncovered evidence of medieval activity surviving on the site in the form of three probable waste disposal pits, in addition to deposits arising from cultivation. These features and deposits may be associated with medieval dwellings that fronted onto Friars Street or perhaps squatter settlements situated outside the city defences. Such a density of medieval material uncovered in terms of the small area exposed, suggests a high level of activity was taking place on the site during the medieval period. Later medieval cultivation or gardening activities may have disturbed or truncated some of the earlier features and deposits on the site.

1 Introduction

A planning application has been submitted to the local planning authority for permission to develop land at the junction of Cross Street and Friars Street in Hereford. The site is situated at NGR: SO 5055 4005.

The site lies to the west of the medieval walled city of Hereford and is a site of archaeological interest. The Local Planning Authority's Archaeology Advisor advised that further information was required before the archaeological implications of the application could be adequately assessed and recommended that an archaeological field evaluation be carried out to provide this information.

There was no brief but a programme of works was discussed with the unit. Edge Design Workshop (the client) commissioned Marches Archaeology to provide the archaeological services required. Marches Archaeology submitted a formal project proposal and this proposal was accepted by the Local Planning Authority's Archaeology Advisor.

2 Aims and objectives

The Proposal stated that the archaeological project would consist of:
the excavation of a single trench 5 metres long

An archaeological evaluation aims to “gain information about the archaeological resource within a given area or site (including presence or absence, character, extent, date, integrity, state of preservation and quality) in order to make an assessment of its merit in the appropriate context, leading to one or more of the following: the formulation of a strategy to ensure the recording, preservation or management of the resource; the formulation of a strategy to initiate a threat to the archaeological resource; the formulation of a proposal for further archaeological investigation within a programme of research” (Institute of Field Archaeologists Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Field Evaluations).

The objectives of the evaluation, based on the above stated aim, were to establish the presence/absence of archaeological deposits and to assess their significance

3 Methodology

Documentary research

Marches Archaeology has worked extensively in Friars Street and both primary and secondary sources have been previously consulted for work on adjacent sites. Therefore no further documentary research was undertaken.

Fieldwork

The upper deposits of a single trench measuring 5m x 1.5m were excavated by mechanical excavator to a level determined to comprise deposits, features or horizons of archaeological significance (Fig. 2). Due to the trench being situated inside a building, artificial lighting was used and consequently features were not as apparent as in normal daylight conditions. All further excavation was completed by hand. Features deemed to be of significant value with regards to the understanding and interpretation of the site were excavated. Two archaeologists were on site for a total of two days during January 2006. On completion of the fieldwork the trench was not backfilled in accordance with the clients wishes.

The recording system included written, drawn and photographic data. Trench recording sheets were completed and context numbers were allocated. Site notes were also made. Plans and sections of significant data were made including a trench location plan showing the position of the trench in relation to surrounding boundaries and buildings. The photographic record comprised of black and white negative and colour transparency film. Digital photographs were also taken. No deposits considered to have environmental, technological or scientific dating potential were encountered so no samples were taken.

Office work

On completion of fieldwork a site archive was prepared. The written, drawn and photographic data was catalogued and cross-referenced and a summary produced. The artefactual data was processed and catalogued. Assessment was based on the site archive. The pottery recovered was not submitted for specialist assessment due to it being a very small assemblage. However, if further work is carried out at the site the pottery will be included and submitted as such for analysis.

4 Site description

The site lies on level terrain some 450m north of the River Wye at the junction of Cross Street (to the north) and Friars Street (to the west) and is approximately 60m south of Eign Gate, Hereford (Fig. 1).

The site encompasses an area of approximately 310 square metres and is wholly occupied by a brick built one-storey building which is roofed with corrugated iron sheeting. Although previously functioning as a car maintenance garage, certainly in the 1940s-50s (pers. comm), it is currently utilised as a workshop. Immediate and adjacent landuse consists of a further workshop area to the east, a sales office to the south and a primary school on the opposing side of Friars Street to the west. Much of the floor area was observed to be concrete overlying, in parts, brick flooring. There are no outside yard or open grassed areas.

The church of St. Nicholas was resituated to the south-east corner of Friars Street in the early 19th Century (Tavener, 2002), some 200m to the south of the study area, therefore incorporating the site into the modern day parish of St. Nicholas.

The underlying geology comprises fluvio-glacial deposits and the site is about 56.40m O.D.

5 Archaeological and historical background

The Friar Street area, Hereford

Only a summary of the archaeological and historical background of the area is produced here and includes the results of a documentary study carried out on nearby sites to the south-west (Appleton-Fox, 2001, Tavener, 2002, Wainwright, 2002 & 2003) and fieldwork to the immediate northwest (Wainwright, 2005). The street has been identified as being occupied during the medieval period and possibly as early as the Saxon period.

The County Sites and Monuments Record however, contains no entries earlier than medieval for the area around Friars Street and only a brief mention will be made of those of immediate archaeological interest (see Appendix I and Fig. 1).

Approximately 35m to the north-west of the study area lie two medieval sites namely the Eign Gate (HSM 26883) and the Eign Gate Mill (HSM 26870). Another medieval gate known as Friars Gate is located approximately 100m to the south (HWCM 00448). In addition, the alignment of modern-day Victoria Street some 25m to the east, lies on the site of the medieval city wall (HWCM 20247). Nearby SMR sites of post medieval date are summarised in Appendix I and located on Fig. 1.

A desk based assessment on Watkin's Flour Mill which is located 100-120m to the southwest concluded that there was no evidence for any prehistoric, Roman or Saxon activity in the area (HWCM 12054) (Hunter, 2000) (Fig. 1). That study considered it likely that there could be some medieval activity in the Friars Street area given its close proximity to the west edge (city wall) of a major medieval settlement. This has indeed proven to be the case as low level medieval activity in the form of gullies and ditches has been excavated at a site about 50 metres to the southwest of the study area (HSM 32116, Appleton-Fox, 2001). The presence

of waste disposal pits, cess pits and possible wells at the same site probably indicates a phase of medieval settlement (HSM 32114, Wainwright, 2003).

A medieval gully or ditch base and possible posthole were discovered during an archaeological evaluation conducted some 100m to the south of the current site (HSM 32108, Tavener, 2002). Furthermore, medieval deposits and features were unearthed in a garden during an archaeological evaluation a mere 20m to the northwest. This investigation concluded that a high level of medieval activity, and probable cultivation, was taking place in close proximity to the study area (HSM 42794, Wainwright, 2005).

The potential for further archaeological medieval remains within the Friars Street area is apparent when viewed in terms of the locations of these aforementioned sites and the positioning of the original city wall and ditch which lay merely 60m to the east.

A search of the records held at the County Records Office found no readily accessible medieval documents or references to Friars Street. The Victoria County History for Herefordshire remains largely unfinished and unpublished. Duncumb (1804) does not mention any medieval records for the street. The absence of medieval records may be more apparent than real, but their scarcity does seem to indicate a paucity of activity along Friars Street in the medieval period. On a cautionary note, it is possible that the street has only been known as Friars Street in comparatively recent times. In 1757, Taylor marked the street as Quakers Lane (Fig. 3).

The earliest records that could be found for Friars Street comprise indentures and conveyances amongst a packet of documents relating to purchases of land in connection with the establishment of the infants school on the east side of Friars Street to the south. The main conveyance date was 1843. The earliest documents date to 1637 and 1712. Later sources record the creation of almshouses on the east side of the street in the 18th and 19th centuries (Duncumb, 1804 & Tonkin, 1975) and there are corporation records for slum clearances in the 1930s.

The early cartographic evidence is perhaps more informative. Speed's map of c. 1610 shows houses along Barton Street to the south and but none on either frontage of Friars Street (Fig. 4). However, the Eign Street frontage appears to be built up and it is possible that the study area, or at least part of it, is within backlands of buildings fronting onto this street.

Taylor's map of 1757 (Fig. 3) has more information. At that date the site lay within an area of property divisions between the east side of Quakers Lane (later Friars Street), and Taylor's 'Town Ditch' (later Victoria Street) which are shown on the map as a neat patchwork of rectangular plots indicating medieval suburban development in the form of allotments. The study area can be seen to incorporate some buildings that front onto Friars Street/Quakers Lane with perhaps gardens or cultivation to the rear.

Elsewhere around the fringes of the medieval city wall, further medieval extra-mural suburbs are plainly evident on Taylor's map, displaying obvious patterns of planned medieval burghage plots (see Eign Street at the top of Fig. 3). District names such as 'Owen Street without the gate' and 'Bye Street without the gate' on Taylor's map were probably ancient at that date. This pattern does not appear along Barton Lane, situated to the south of the site. Taylor's map demonstrates that if there ever had been a system of medieval burghages along

either Barton Lane or the west side of Friars Street, then all trace had disappeared before 1757.

Price's map of 1802 (Fig. 5) shows more buildings along the frontage on the west side of Friars Street and on Cross Street than Taylor mapped in 1757 and the site area was built up. Although the Tithe map of 1843 shows fewer buildings to the west of the site on Friars Street than either of the earlier maps it does show more development on both Cross Street and Town Ditch Lane (Fig. 6). The current study area occupies the northwestern part of enclosure 39. This, and the neighbouring enclosures 38 and 40, are all described as 'scrites of buildings, yards and ancient gardens' (January, 20, 2006, Herefordshire SMR).

It should be noted that prior to the relocation of the church of St. Nicholas as previously mentioned (compare Figs. 1 and 3), the study area lay within the southern limits of the All Saints parish.

The 1904 Ordnance Survey Second Edition 25 Inch Survey shows more development to the east of Friars Street in terms of a hospital, infant school and various works. The study area lies at the northern end of a row of terraced housing (Fig. 7). The buildings within the site area seem to have additional outbuildings to the rear and there was probably large-scale demolition of these properties in the slum clearances of the 1930's prior to the construction of the building that is there today (Fig. 1).

6 The evaluation trench

The natural pinkish clay with occasional pebbles and sandstone [123] was seen at 55.34m O.D (Figs. 8 and 9, Plate 1)). Overlying this was a grey brown clean silty layer [109] with a depth of approximately 80mm which has been interpreted as a medieval cultivation or garden soil.

Cutting the natural, in the centre of the trench, was a sub-circular pit cut [122]. It is probable that this feature cut layer [109] but the relationship was lost. The fill was a light beige brown silty clay [121] which contained medieval pottery. The northern part of this feature was truncated by a later pit.

Cutting [109] in the southern end of the trench was cut [128]. This was squarish in shape with square to rounded corners with only its north to south dimension apparent. Its southern edge had a sharp, near vertical slope, whereas its northern counterpart was much more gradual. This feature was not bottomed but was at least 500mm deep and has been interpreted as a medieval pit. The fills of [128] were [127], [126], [124] and [125]. The northern slope probably had less of an incline due to slumpage from the edges of the cut. Medieval pottery was recovered from fills [124] and [127].

Above [128] and [122] was a clean grey silty layer [108]. This was approximately 200-250mm thick and was interpreted as a layer of medieval cultivation soil.

Cutting [108] and [122] was a feature that was at least 400mm deep [120]. This was in the northern end of the trench and was not bottomed. The overall shape of this feature was unknown but it was interpreted as a probable pit cut with a gradual slope that became more vertical with depth. The fills of this cut were [119], [118], [117] and [116]. Although there

were no pottery finds within these fills, animal bone was recovered in copious quantities which included juvenile pig remains.

Above [108] was a compacted dark grey layer [107]. It contained a few brick and coal fragments that were thought to have been pressed in from the layer above. The pottery recovered gave the context a late medieval date. The compact nature of this layer and the presence of late medieval finds suggests that this context marked the top of the medieval cultivation soil. Although this layer appeared to be later than the fills of pit [120], it is possible that trample at that level may have smeared the top of this context over the pit. Therefore the pit could be later than [107].

Seen only in the northern end of the trench above [116] was a very shallow mortar layer that may have been the remains of a floor surface [115]. This was no more than 20mm thick. Directly above was a demolition layer of greyish brown silty clay containing large brick, tile, sandstone and cobble fragments [114]. This was about 150-200mm and contained pottery of 19th century date. Context [106] which was seen to lie above this was 400mm in depth. It is possible that [114] may be contemporary with [106] as the make up was the same, but the various fragments in [114] were, on the whole, larger. Pottery dates recovered from [106] suggested a 19th century date.

Above the two demolition layers was a compact layer of cobbles approximately 75mm in depth [105]. Overlying this was another cobbled surface of similar construction and thickness but was slightly less compact [104].

Overlying the cobbled surface only in the northern end of the trench was a thin lense of black material [113]. This was approximately 30mm deep. Immediately above this and again seen only in the same area (in section) was a lense of mid grey-brown silty clay with a depth of about 50mm [112].

Overlying the cobbled surface [104] throughout the rest of the trench was another layer interpreted as a mortar floor [110]. This was about 20mm thick.

Cutting [110] was a brick footing for a wall running east-west [111]. It is possible that this was an internal wall which was later demolished and then covered with a 150mm thick black layer consisting of coal fragments and ash [103].

Above [103] was a 100-150mm make-up layer containing brick fragments [102] for the concrete surface [101] above. This was 150mm thick.

7 Discussion

The earliest deposit seen overlying the natural at 55.34 metres O.D. was a medieval cultivation or garden soil [109].

Cutting the natural and probably [109] was medieval pit [122]. Also cutting [109] was another medieval pit cut [128]. The tops of these features and other contemporary ground surfaces may have been disturbed by a later phase of cultivation in the medieval period [108].

Pit cut [120] in the north end of the trench contained no pottery but feasibly dates to the late medieval or early post-medieval period due to its relationship with layer [107]. This layer,

which contained late medieval pottery, was probably smeared into the top of the fills of [120] by trample at the late medieval ground level, and therefore could probably pre-date this feature.

During the medieval period it can be suggested that the ground surface was approximately 380 mm above the natural as no medieval deposits were found above 55.70 metres O.D. However it is likely that 18th-19th century development, the demolition of which can be seen in layers [114] and [106], significantly destroyed some medieval ground surfaces (and early post-medieval deposits) so that originally the medieval period ground surface may have been higher than 55.70 metres O.D.

In conclusion, evidence of medieval activity does survive on the site in the form of three probable waste disposal pits, in addition to deposits arising from cultivation. These features may be associated with medieval dwellings that fronted Friars Street or perhaps squatter settlements arising from the immediacy of the city defences and Eign Gate. Although only about 7.5 square metres of the site was excavated, there was a relatively high density of medieval features and deposits which does suggest a high level of activity on the site during the medieval period. However, disturbance by cultivation during the medieval period and development during later periods may have removed or truncated some of the earlier features.

8 Acknowledgements

The author wishes to thank Richard Powles for his kind support during the evaluation and Jo Wainwright for assisting in both the site work and the invaluable advice given during the writing of this report.

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Taylor, 1757, *Plan of the city of Hereford*

Tithe map, 1943, Hereford, Parish of All Saints

Watkins, G.G, 1987, *Trace of the Hereford Tithe maps*

Ordnance Survey, 1885, Town Series (1:500) – Hereford sheet 33.16.6

Ordnance Survey, 1904, County Series (1:2500) – Hereford sheet 33.16

Ordnance Survey, 1990, (1:1250)

10 Archive

The site code is CSH06A The archive consists of:

- 4 trench sheets
- 1 drawing index sheet
- 3 field drawings on 3 sheets
- 1 project proposal
- 1 copy of the report
- 1 sheet of levels
- 1 sheets of survey notes
- 4 sheets of site diary and notes
- 8 finds sheets
- 4 photo record sheets
- 1 film of black and white photographic negatives
- 1 film of colour photographic transparencies

1 box of finds:

The archive is currently held by Marches Archaeology awaiting transfer to Hereford Museum. The accession number is HSM 43221.

Appendix I – List of SMR sites

SMR Number	Description	Grid Reference	Date
HWCN 26883	Site of the medieval Eign Gate, on Eign Street (Figs. 1 & 3)	NGR SO 5070 4005	Medieval
HWCN 26870	Site of medieval Eign Gate Mill (Fig. 1)	NGR SO 5070 4004	Medieval
HWCN 20247	Part of the medieval city wall. Early maps show that considerable portions of the medieval city wall were still standing at those dates (Taylor, 1757, O.S., 1885) (see Figs 1 & 3)	(around) NGR SO 5072 3990	Medieval
HWCN 00448	Site of the medieval Friars Gate, on Nicholas Street. The Friar lay between Barton Street and the River Wye (Figs. 1 & 3)	NGR SO 5073 3978	Medieval
HSM 32114 & HSM32115	Medieval waste disposal pits, cess pits and possible wells. Possible medieval field boundaries.	NGR SO 5058 3992	Medieval
HSM 32116	Medieval deposits and features such as gullies and ditches.	NGR SO 5058 3992	Medieval
HSM 32108	Medieval gully or ditch base and possible posthole	NGR SO 5059 3979	Medieval
HSM 42794	Medieval deposits and features. Medieval cultivation soil	NGR SO 5056 3990	Medieval
HSM 26935	17 th Century Quakers Meeting House, on Friars Street. The Meeting House and space for a burial ground are shown on Taylor's map, 1757 (Figs. 1 & 3)	NGR SO 5064 3984	17 th Century - Post medieval
HSM 26937	Taylor's map (1757) indicates the site of a Turnpike Gate (post medieval toll gate) on Barton Road (see Figs. 1 & 3)	NGR SO 5055 3974	18 th Century - Post medieval
HWCN 11859	An iron foundry was established on Friars Street in 1834 by a Captain Radford and by 1858 had become the Watkin's Imperial Flour Mills (below) (Figs. 1 & 3)	NGR SO 5060 3990	19 th Century - Post medieval
HWCN 12054	The Imperial Steam Flour Mills, on Friars Street. The Hereford Iron Foundry Works were taken over by Charles Watkins c. 1859 and converted to a steam operated flour mill. The original foundry buildings were retained but considerable extensions were added. These were recently demolished	NGR SO 5060 3990	19 th Century – Post medieval

Appendix II – List of Contexts

Context	Description	Interpretation
101	Concrete	Modern ground surface
102	Makeup with brick fragments and demolition debris (approx 220mm deep)	Modern. Make-up for [101]
103	Black layer consisting of coal fragments and ash (80mm)	Modern
104	Cobbled surface with rounded/sub-rounded cobbles of about 80mm diameter (75mm)	19 th century surface
105	Cobbled surface with rounded/sub-rounded cobbles of about 80mm diameter (similar to (104) but possibly more compacted) (75mm)	19 th century surface
106	Demolition makeup with brick/tile fragments in a very dark grey matrix (400mm)	19 th , possibly 18 th century, demolition material
107	Compacted dark grey layer with brick/coal fragments pressed in from (106). Some medieval pottery sherds and bone. (60mm)	Late medieval top of cultivation soil
108	Grey silty layer, much cleaner. Medieval sherds present. A-horizon. (80mm)	Late medieval cultivation soil
109	Grey/brownish silty. Quite clean. B-horizon.	Medieval cultivation soil
110	Mortar surface overlying cobbles (104)	19 th century surface
111	Brick footing for internal? wall running E-W (seen in E-facing section)	Internal wall footing
112	Lense of mid-grey/brown silty clay (seen in south of trench)	Layer
113	As (103) – thin lense in south of trench	Layer
114	Layer of Brick/tile/sandstone/cobble fragments in a greyish brown silty clay. Underlies? (106). Rubble is larger though possibly same layer i.e contemporary.	19 th century demolition material
115	Possible remains of mortar floor in south of trench.	Post-medieval surface
116	Fill of [120], Mixture of pink clean clay & pinky brown silty clay, occasional pebbles. Possible slumpage in [120]? or latest fill of cut?	Fill of [120]
117	Fill of [120] - Light brown/grey silty clay with frequent animal bone/oyster shell, occasional pebbles and sandstone, moderate mortar flecks/charcoal	Fill of [120]
118	Fill of [120] - Mixture of pink clay & humic brown/black clay with occasional orange clay /mortar/pebble fragments	Fill of [120]
119	Fill of [120] - Mid grey/brown silty clay with frequent mortar/charcoal, occasional pebbles	Fill of [120]
120	Cut. Cuts (108) - Shape not known – probable pit cut with gradual slope at top, more vertical with depth. Not bottomed.	Late medieval or early post-medieval
121	Fill of [122] – light beige/brown silty clay with frequent pebbles/mortar, occasional sandstone/charcoal fragments	Fill of [122]
122	Cut (Pit) – Probably subcircular – not excavated, underlies (108). Unsure of relationship between (109) + (122) as machined off. Probably cuts (109)	Medieval pit cut
123	Dirty natural. Pebbles in a pinky silty clay matrix with sandstone fragments	Natural
124	Fill of [128] – Mid grey/brown silty clay, frequent pebbles/mortar/sandstone. Similar to (108)	Fill of [128]
125	Fill of [128] – Redeposited pinky gravels & pink clay with sandstone fragments.	Fill of [128]
126	Fill of [128] – Soft beige silty clay with clay fragmnets, occassional mortar/pebbles/charcoal	Fill of [128]
127	Fill of [128] – Beige brown silty clay with charcoal flecks, mortar & pebbles	Fill of [128]
128	Cut [Medieval pit/ditch] – probable square feature only N-S dimension seen. Square to rounded corners. On south edge - sharper slope. (Near vertical sides) On north edge – slope gradual. Not bottomed.	Medieval pit cut. Possibly 14 th century

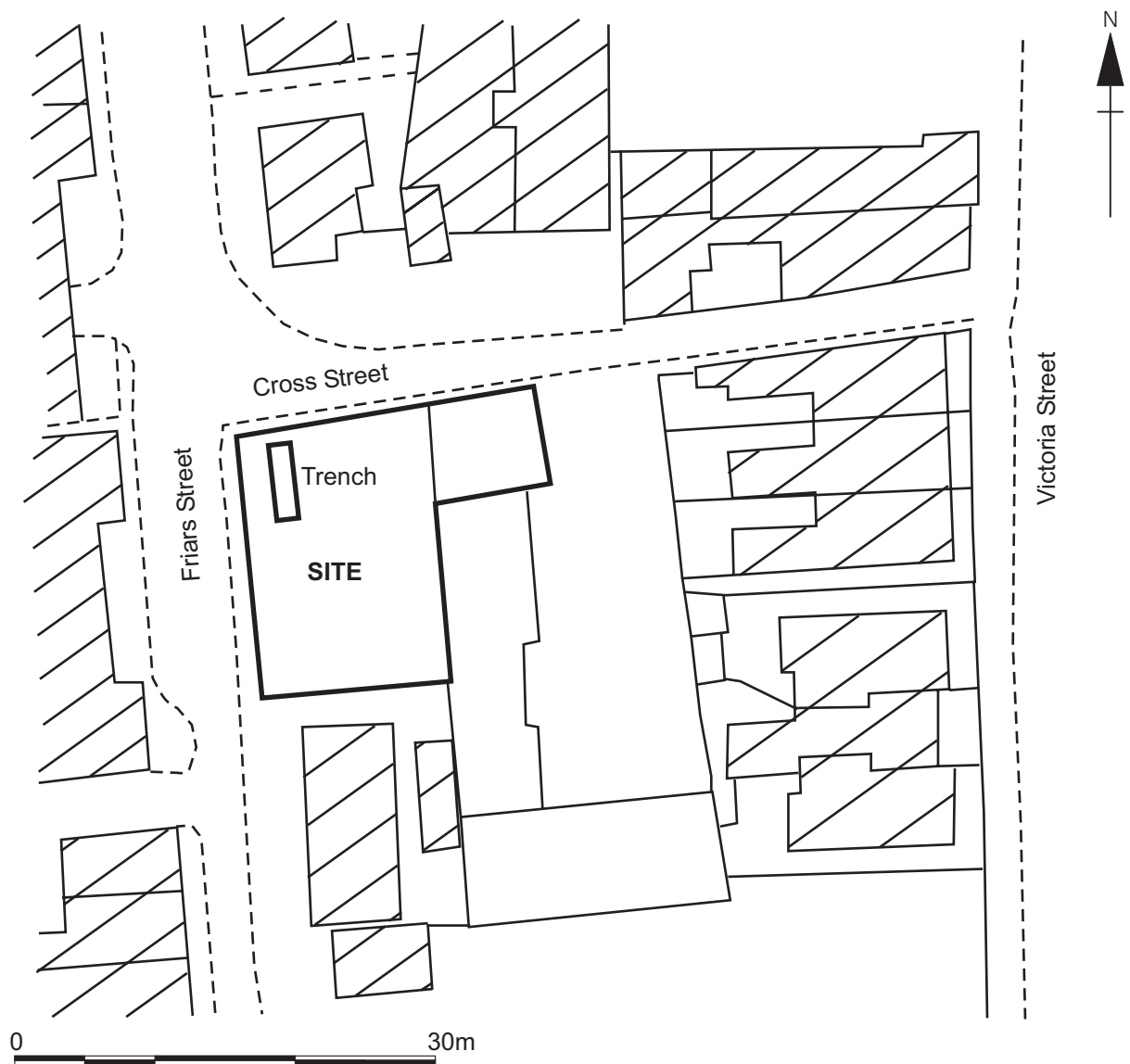


Fig. 2 Location of evaluation trench

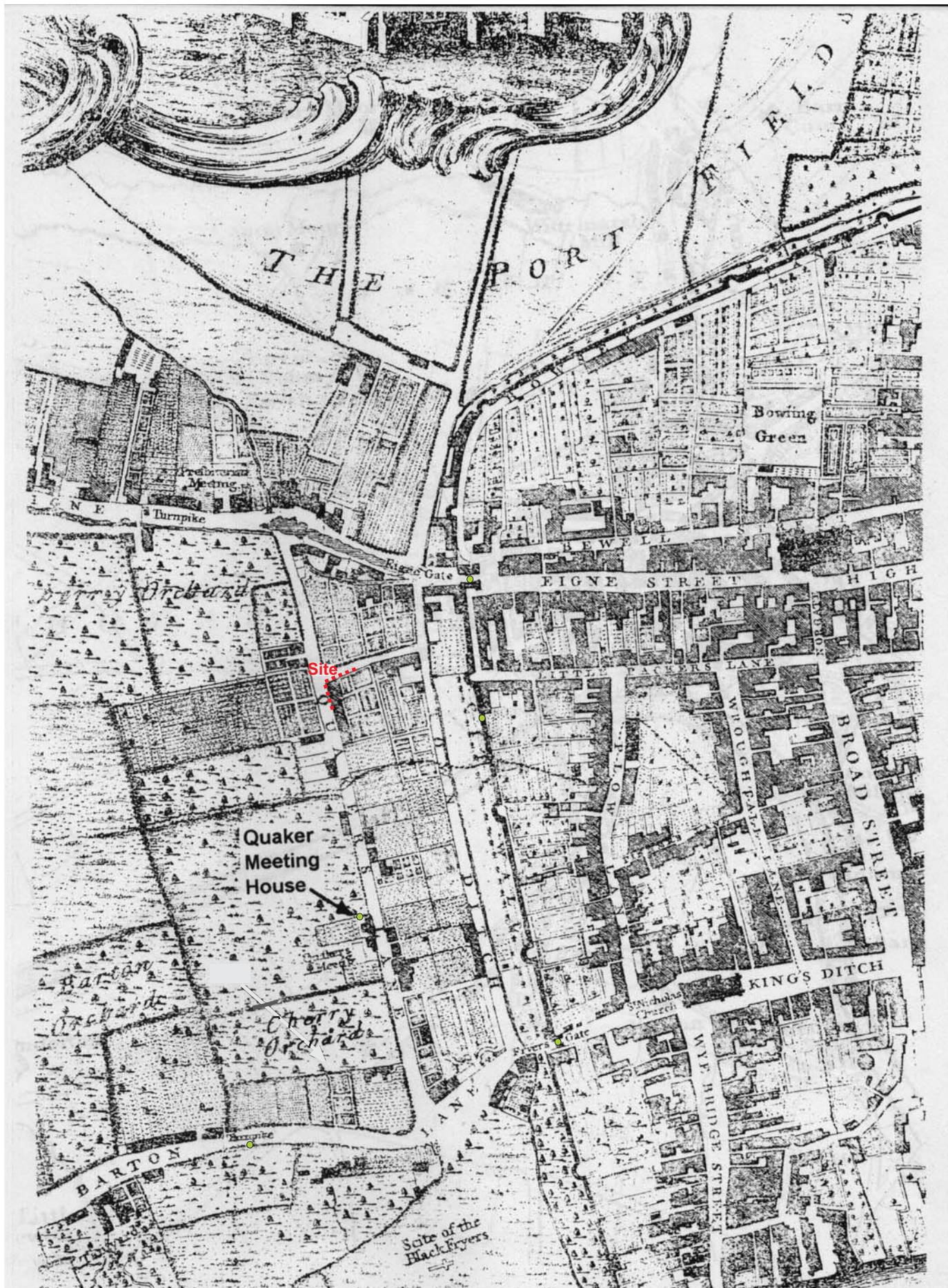


Fig. 3 Taylor's 1757 Plan of the city of Hereford (part of)

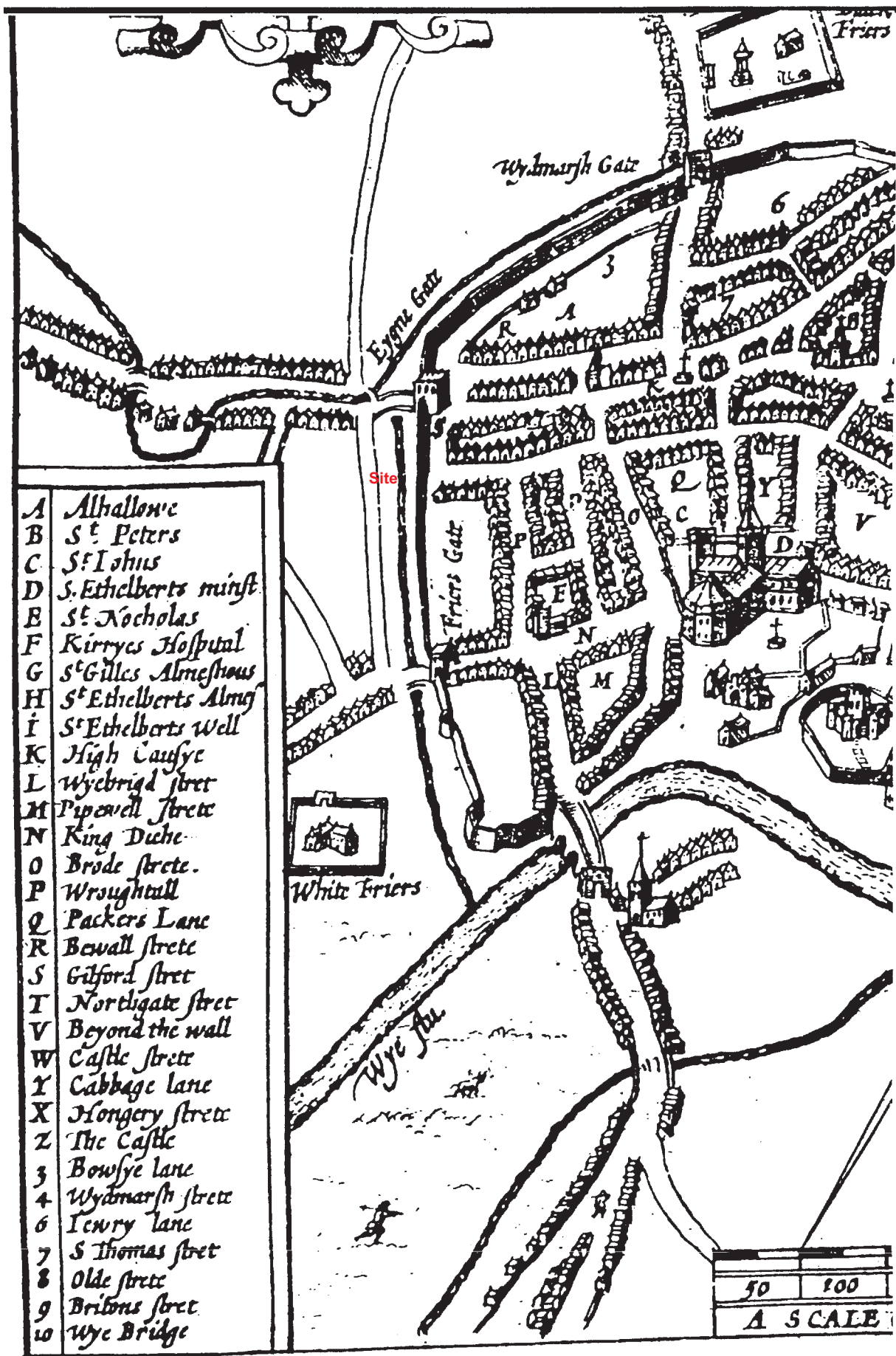


Fig. 4 Speed's c. 1610 inset cartouche of the city of Hereford on his County map (part of)

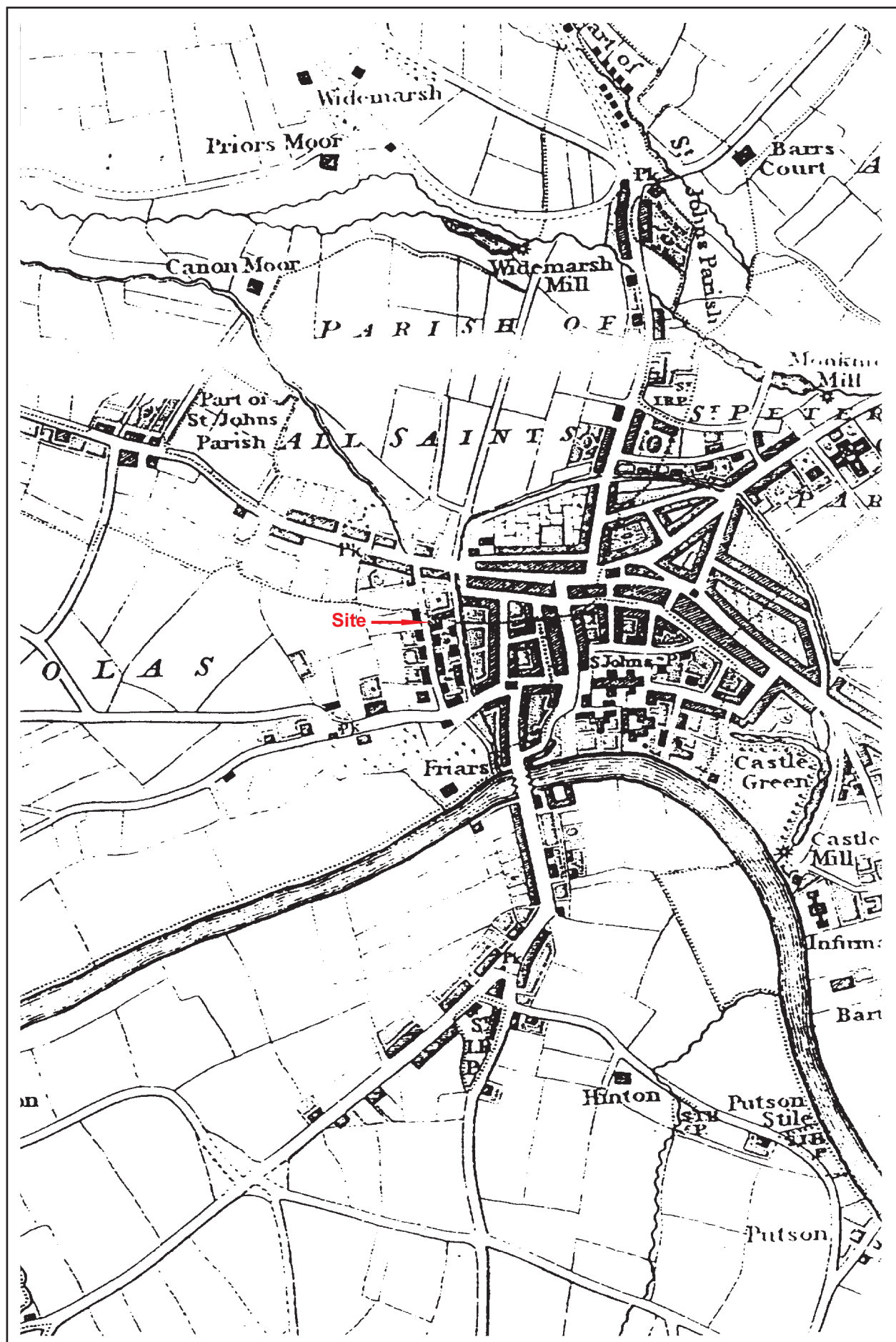


Fig. 5 Price's 1802 Plan of the city of Hereford (part of)

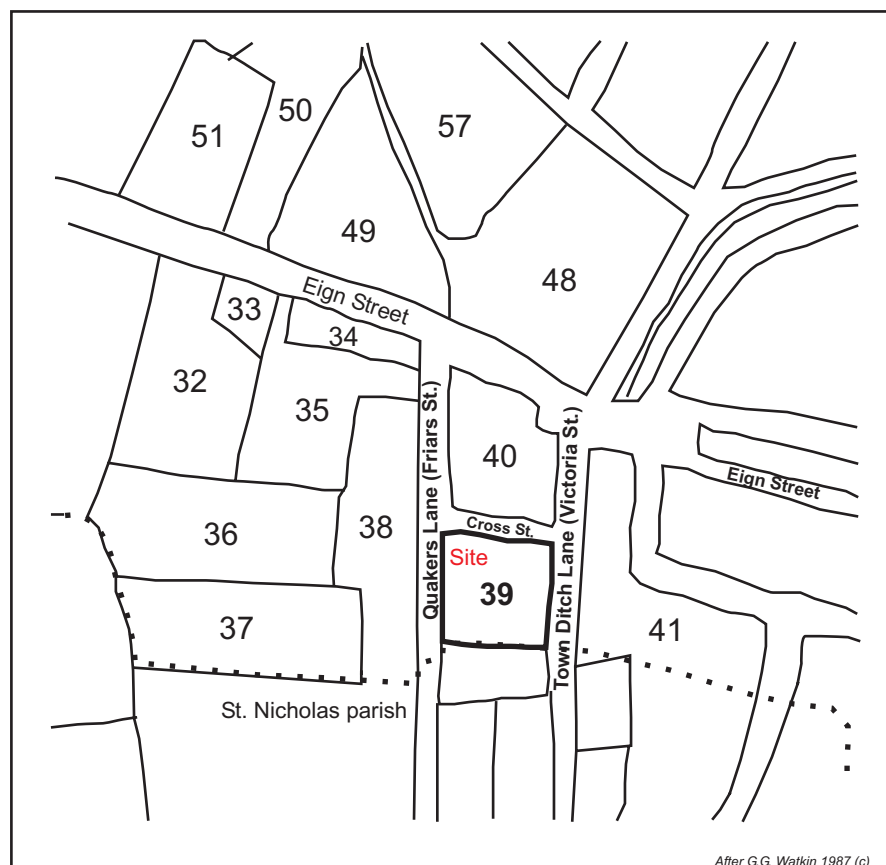
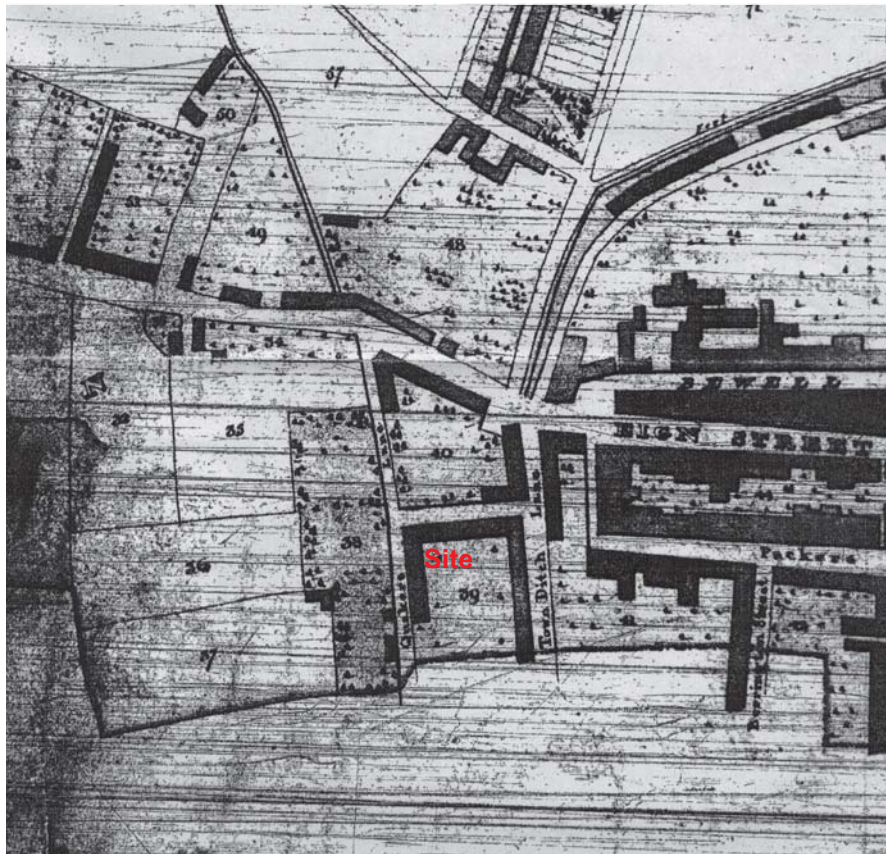
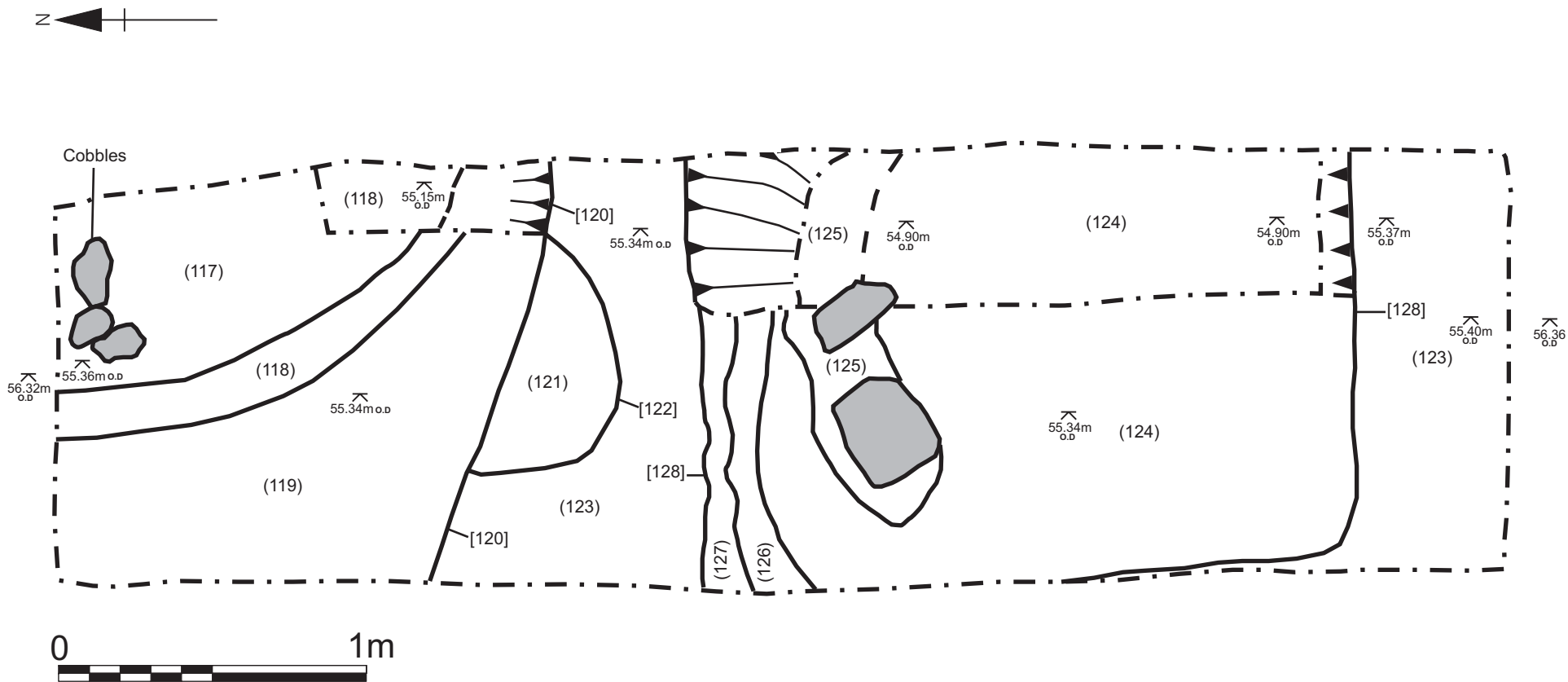


Fig. 6 Tithe Map, 1853, All Saints Parish of Hereford (part of)



Fig. 7 Ordnance Survey, 1904, part of 1:2500 sheet 33.16 (not to scale)

Fig. 8 Plan of features



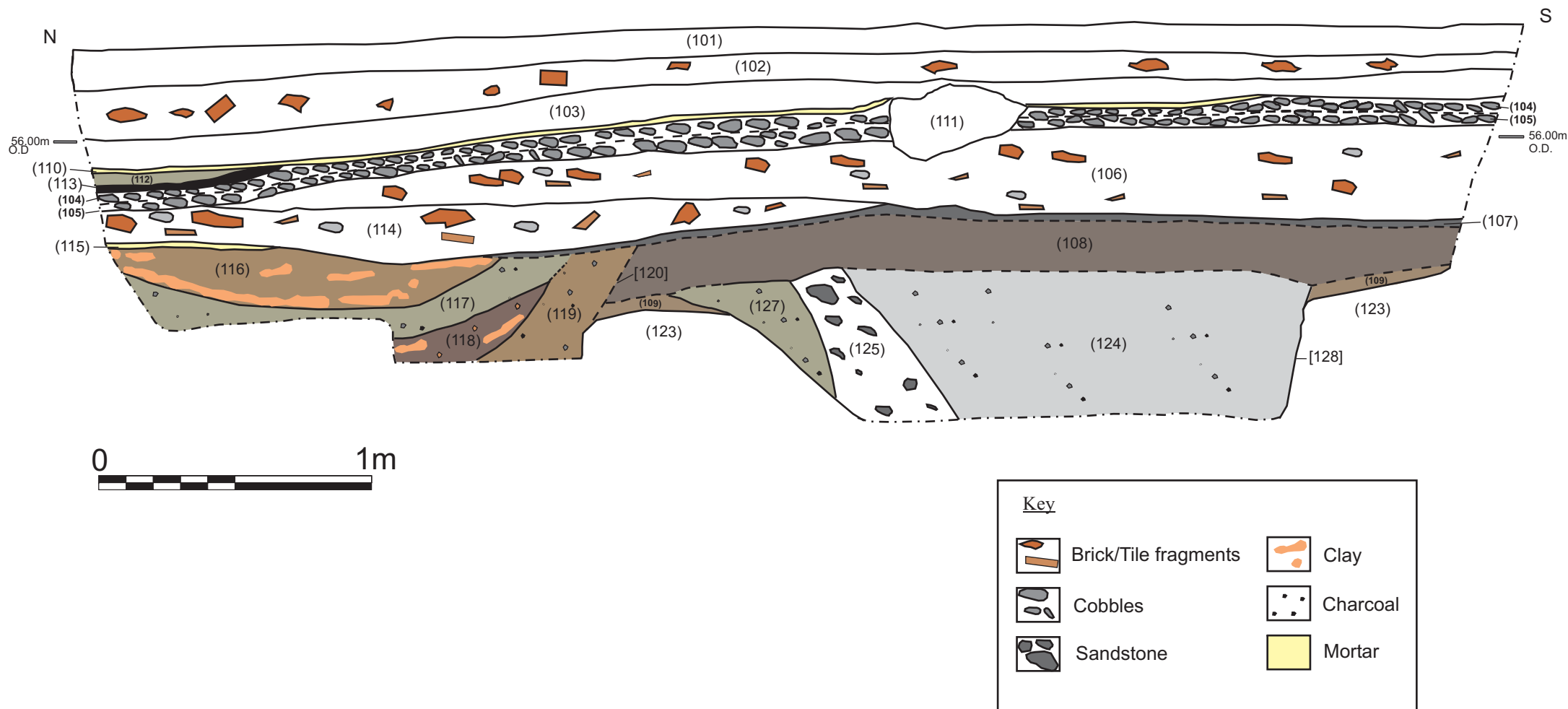


Fig. 9 West facing section of the evaluation trench



Plate 1 View of trench from north