# Edgbaston House
# Walker Street, Wellington, Telford

## Report on an Archaeological Site Investigation

406.0203.00004
February 2010

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## CONTENTS



## FIGURES

# 1.0 NON-TECHNICAL SUMMARY

## 1.1 Scope of works

This report describes the results of a programme of archaeological site investigation which took place at Edgbaston House, Walker Street, Wellington (Grid ref NGR SJ 650 114) in tandem with a programme of Historic Building Recording (SLR 2010). The technical details are contained in the results and analysis sections (sections 7 – 10), with summaries and interpretation presented in the discussion and conclusion (sections 11 – 12).

The investigation was commissioned by Telford and Wrekin Council to evaluate and document any archaeological remains at the site (see sections 2 and 5). The investigation consisted of nine trial trenches excavated across the area of a proposed regeneration scheme in the town centre, a sample of approximately 10% of the total development area. The site works were carried out in November and December 2009.

## 1.2 Archaeological results

The investigation uncovered deep waterlogged medieval deposits in a zone approximately 4m wide and 20m long immediately to the rear of Nos. 9 and 11 Walker Street. These included a multi-phase ditch representing a burgage plot boundary which had been infilled in the 13$^{th}$-14$^{th}$ century. The fills of the ditch had very good organic preservation, and the discovery of insect remains indicate that it had contained stable waste, rotting refuse and human faeces, typical of the disposal of cess in an urban environment. It also contained horn cores and animal bone likely to have derived from industrial tanning/horn working activities on Tan Bank to the east. The presence of lime may indicate an attempt to control the smell and insects emanating from the ditch. The boundary represented a plot 45m in length oriented east-west and fronting onto Tan Bank.

Two medieval refuse pits and a timber lined well/latrine were located to the west of the ditch, to the rear of No 11 Walker Street. A sherd of pot found in one of the pits dates to the later medieval period (15$^{th}$- 16$^{th}$ century). It is likely that these features are broadly contemporary with the original construction and use of No 11 Walker Street (the Historic Building Recording has identified a late medieval core to this building), at which time the ditch to the east had fallen out of use.

To the south of these features, the creation of car parking and outbuildings in the 20$^{th}$ century had caused widespread disturbance. A narrow band of surviving buried soil and a 19$^{th}$ century sandstone wall footing were observed between two areas of car parking, representing an older plot boundary between Nos. 11 and 13 Walker Street.

## 1.3 General implications

These findings are among the first archaeological discoveries to be made in Wellington, and highlight the fact that there is a good potential for further discoveries to be made relating to the town's medieval development, particularly given the presence of deep waterlogged remains with excellent organic preservation.

The fieldwork also highlighted an important issue relating to archaeological evaluation sample sizes. The iterative approach that was adopted combined with focussed research aims, resulted in over 10% of the development area being investigated in a two phased programme of work. This was only just sufficient to locate the surviving area of archaeological potential, and it is likely that a smaller sample of 5% would have been insufficient to characterise the deposits on the site.

## 2.0 INTRODUCTION

This report describes the results of a programme of archaeological site investigation and watching brief carried out at Edgbaston House, Wellington as part of Phase 1 of a regeneration scheme in the medieval town centre. It has been prepared by SLR Consulting on behalf of Telford and Wrekin Council (hereafter the Client). The site works took place between 5th November and 1st December 2009, forming part of a programme of archaeological works at the site which also included a Historic Building Survey (recording) the results of which are set out in a separate report (SLR 2010) in order to help discharge conditions 4 - 6 placed on the Conservation Area Consent for the scheme.

The site is undergoing regeneration as part of Telford and Wrekin Council's programme to improve the south-western side of Wellington Town Centre and is situated within the Wellington Conservation Area at NGR SJ 650 114, to the rear of numbers 9 - 11 Walker Street. A Historic Building Assessment was prepared (SLR 2009 a) which investigated the historical and architectural merit of the building stock prior to demolition. In addition, as part of the study a Planning Application Supporting Statement was produced (SLR 2009a). This highlighted that the site lies within the medieval core of Wellington town, and that there was a potential for the site to contain archaeological deposits associated with medieval buildings and burgage plot boundaries which should be investigated prior to any construction works for the development.

The strategy for the site investigation was set out in a Written Scheme of Investigation (SLR 2009 b) issued to the Client and the archaeological advisor to the local planning authority prior to the commencement of works.

This report has been structured and written so that it fulfils several functions: that of a technical report for the planning process, as well as an informative document for those who are interested in the history of Wellington. The report sets out the circumstances and scope of the investigation, the aims and methodology that have guided the archaeological works, and a substantial narrative for results. The main results regarding deposits and stratigraphy are contained in section 7 which has been organized by trench description. Each trench has a summary to aid rapid reading of the report, with the main technical data contained in a smaller font size, and illustrated by annotated photographs, plans and section drawings.

- This report, in tandem with the Historic Building Survey (recording) report, demonstrates that the conditions place on Conservation Area Consent have been adequately discharged for Phase 1 of the Wellington Regeneration Scheme

- This report provides a detailed technical evaluation of archaeological remains, and the potential significance of those remains within the context of historic Wellington

- This report incorporates technical archaeological data and results of analyses

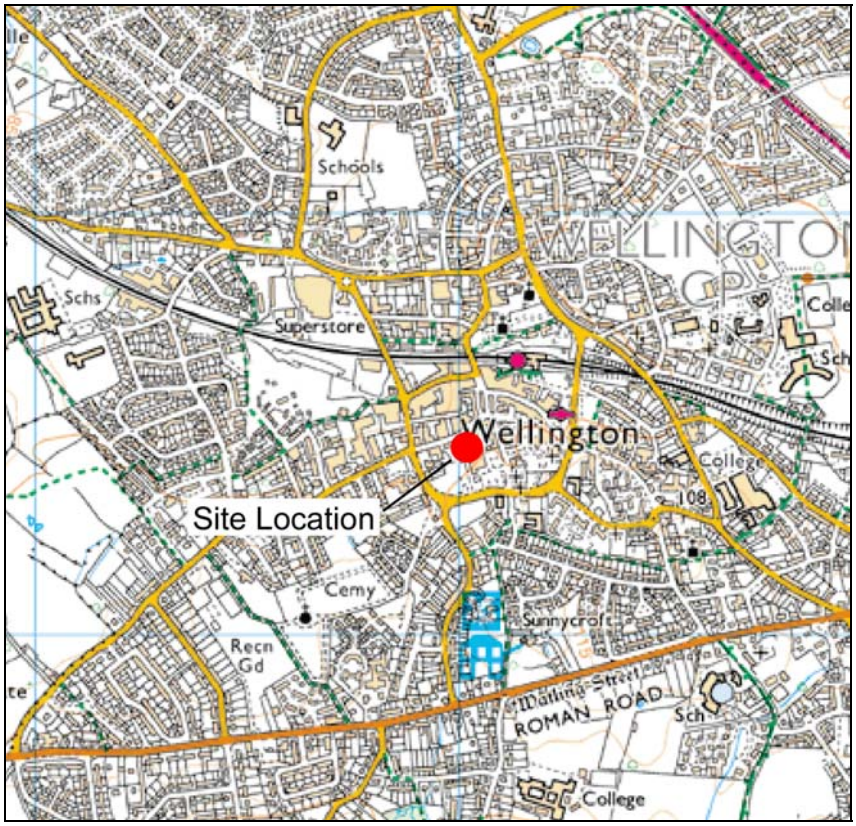
- This report presents an interpretation of the archaeological evidence and recommends that a zone of significant survival to the south of Nos. 9 - 11 Walker Street should be further investigated in the future if they are threatened by ground disturbance during Phases 2 and 3 of the regeneration scheme

- The results have demonstrated that the proposed construction of the new library and civic centre will not impact on archaeological remains due to the removal of historic deposits in this part of the development area during the 20th century

## 3.0 SITE LOCATION AND DESCRIPTION

The site is located at NGR SJ 650 114, within the south-western part of Wellington town centre (Figures 1 and 2). The site comprises an irregular parcel of land c. 0.1 ha in size situated to the south of Walker Street, which runs northeast towards the market square in the centre of the town, The focus of the site investigation comprises the backplots of Edgbaston House (No 13) as well as Nos. 9 and 11 Walker Street, all of which separate the site from the street frontage. The site is bounded to the east by a north-south continuation of Walker Street, created in the late 20th century to carry traffic away from the town centre via Tan Bank. Until recently the eastern edge and central portion of the site contained modern buildings (including a public toilet and small shop unit) which have since been demolished leaving only the main structures along the street front intact. The western boundary of the site is defined by a multi-phase brick wall which follows the possible alignment of a medieval burgage plot.

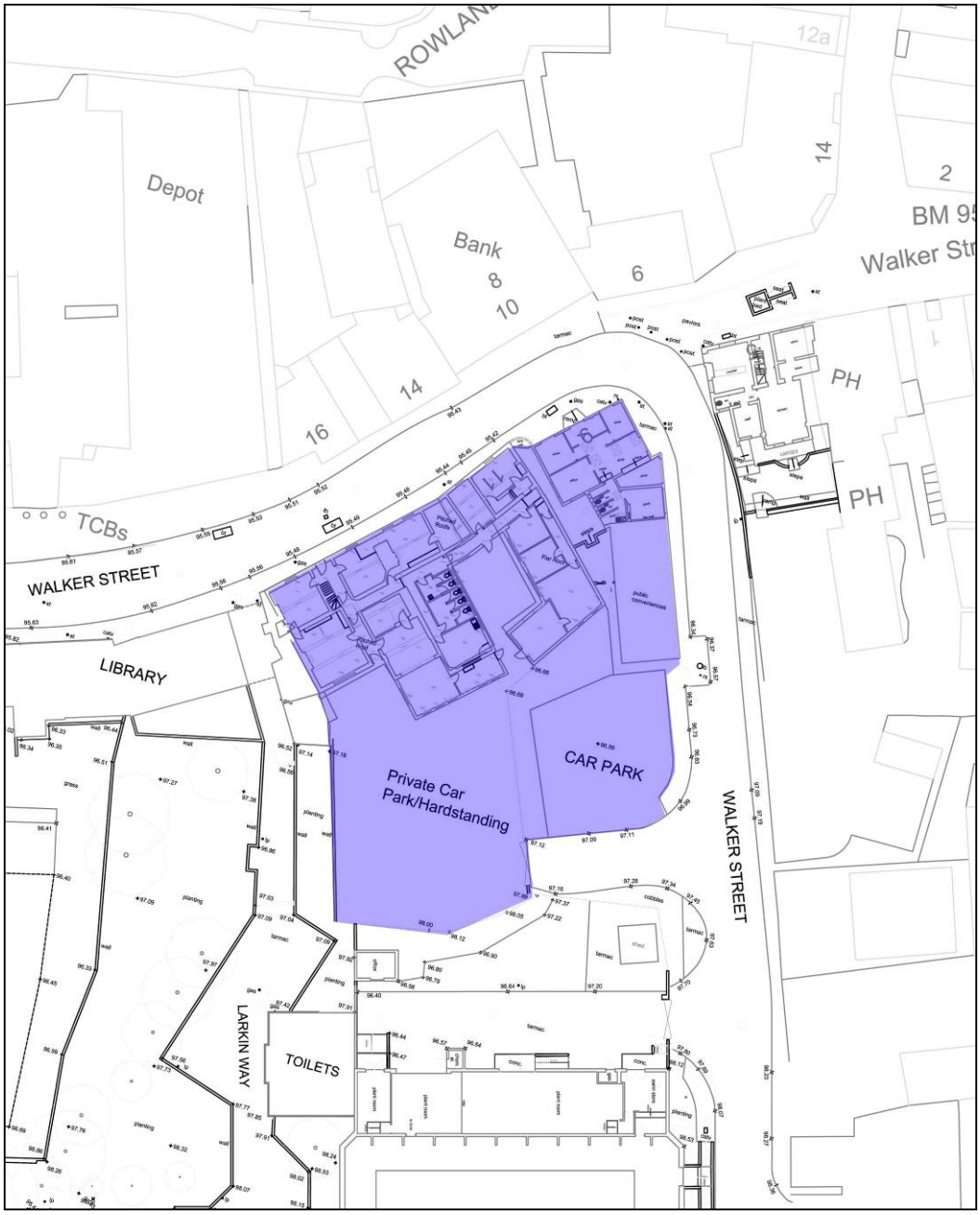
**Figure 1: Site Location**




The topography of the site comprises a level area to the rear of the buildings around 95.5m AOD, and a higher terrace to the south formerly used as two areas of car parking between 96.7 and 97.12m AOD. This higher terrace was thought to represent the original ground surface lying beyond the areas of disturbance from 20th century construction activities. The raised ground was retained along its northern edge by a modern brick wall, recently removed to expose a modern build-up of earth behind.

The local geology comprises glaciofluvial sand and gravel overlying sandstones and mudstones of the Bridgenorth and Salop Formations (BGS Geoindex).

**Figure 2: Detailed Site Location (Boundary Approximate)**



## 4.0 HISTORICAL AND ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

The history and development of the site has been described in detail in the historic building assessment (SLR 2009a). Part of the baseline section is repeated below to give historical context to the site investigation.

### 4.1 Historical Description

Wellington town centre lies on glacial sands and gravels at an elevation of 95 – 100m AOD. The origin to the town is unknown, although the important Roman road of Watling Street runs east-west just south of the town, and to the south of this the Iron Age centre of the *Cornovii* is located as a ditched and banked enclosure on top of the Wrekin. The derivation of the Anglo-Saxon place-name for Wellington is not obvious, and could either mean “”grove with a heathen temple” *Weo-leah* or “the settlement of Weola”, *weola* being a personal name and *–ingtun* settlement (Gelling 1990). The earliest historical reference can be found in the Domesday Book which refers to “Walitone” manor as having a population of 33 families and a priest, and that it was held in 1066 by the Mercian Earl Edwin. The Victoria County History suggests that a Saxon core may have been located around a market next to the church. During the medieval period it was variously held by Earl Roger, the King, Haughmond Abbey, and various important families including the Burnells. A forest and deer park existed close by and this played an important part in the town’s history.

During the 13th century a planned town was developed, with a charter for a weekly market on Thursdays granted in 1244, and two fairs in June and August. This would have provided an economic stimulus for the town’s growth. By the early 14th century burgages and burgesses (those who were free to trade) are mentioned in historic documents (VCH Vol. 11). The town developed in traditional ways during the later medieval and post-medieval period with a variety of goods and services offered within the town and development of a small number of industries, and the town would have acted as a market centre for a rural hinterland.

Early historic maps show the morphological development of the town from a single north-south street depicted on John Rocque’s map of Shropshire 1752, through Robert Baugh’s 1808 map of Shropshire which shows two north-south roads and a further road curving off to the west, to the detailed John Wood’s map of Wellington of 1831, and the Tithe Apportionments map of much the same period. John Wood’s map shows that the town had developed on a cross pattern, a very traditional planned layout for medieval towns, with the market place at the centre. This is where the market cross would have stood, the omphalus of the community, with the church on the north of the town and the Old Hall to the south. The market place is shown as having two blocks of buildings infilling it, dividing the market into three north-south lanes, Dun Cow, Crown Street, and Swine Market. Walker Street formed the western arm of the cross, running westwards into New Town. Two parallel streets to north and south (Butcher Lane and New Hall Street) are probably part of the original medieval planned layout, along which later growth developed. The western part of Edgbaston House is shown as the Sun Inn, owned by Thomas Turner Esq., and the eastern part is shown as The Dispensary, with a courtyard between them, and small brook running through their back plots.

The 1831 map shows the layout of burgage plots, with long property divisions stretching back from the street frontages, that probably date back to medieval times. These are apparent on both sides of Walker Street, and their continuation can be traced on early OS mapping. Modern development, however has begun to obliterate this pattern. The burgage plot behind the western part of Edgbaston House and behind the workhouse further west along Walker Street, display a sinuous course which is probably derived from burgage plots laid out along selions, or medieval strip fields. The back plots of the eastern part of

Edgbaston House and eastern Walker Street do not have a similar layout, because the area also forms the back plot for Tan Bank, the principal north – south street of the town.

A workhouse was founded in 1743 and this moved to the south side of Walker Street in 1797. The guardians purchased Edgbaston House in 1897 so that they could move their offices and board room there. Walker Street was also the location for the new brick-built offices of the Wellington Commissioners, which became Wellington Urban District Council in 1894, showing that the Street formed the administrative focus of the town, supplemented by the Edwardian library of 1902 a few years later. Trade directories show that a wide variety of trades also operated along Walker Street from 1851, including blacksmiths, bakers, inns, a veterinary surgeon and an umbrella-maker.

Very few archaeological investigations have been conducted within Wellington, and only one within the town centre, which was at 8 Church Street in 1998. The potential for archaeological survival within the Conservation Area and all phases of the regeneration project must therefore be considered high, as they lie within the historic core. It is possible that modern development may have damaged or removed some of the archaeological record, but this will need site investigation to establish for certain.

### 4.2 Walker Street in context: historic mapping

Based on Wellington's urban form, the east-west line of Walker Street represents part of the medieval development of the town, being one of three main trading routes into the centre, converging with a former central open market place that is now infilled and serviced by Dun Cow Lane and Crown Street. Typical of the majority of medieval streets in Wellington (and elsewhere), Walker Street does not form a straight line, instead it kinks slightly to the north, roughly where Edgbaston House is located. The kink within the street line is present on all mapping. At the eastern end of the street the ground dips slightly to 95.97m AOD. Approximately 120m west (and once visible on No. 9 Walker Street) is a bench mark with a value of 315.43 ft above sea level (96.14 m).[1]

The map regression, which includes detailed maps dating to 1831[2], shows a slow and continuous development of the street. Much of the development replaces or incorporates the medieval form. Using the National Grid map (scale 1:10,000) of 1974 Edgbaston House and the two neighbouring buildings to the east are numbered 11 and 13 Walker Street (No. 13 Walker Street representing Edgbaston House).[3] The numbering sequence coincides with the numbering system used in the 19th and 20th century trade directories for the town.

Based on the mapping, the buildings along Walker Street appear to acknowledge and respect the earlier medieval street line and associated burgage plots including those to the rear of Edgbaston House and the adjoining properties to the east. Present on the 1831 map are marked a number of plot owners and several businesses. Present on the northern side of the street are *The Hundred* and the *Duke of Cumberland* public houses and a possible wheelwright. Both public houses stand opposite Edgbaston House which was at this time known as the *Sun Inn.* To the west of Sun Inn is the Union Work House, the building line of which still survives. Further west were a series of small terraced buildings, probably worker's dwellings with the line of their respective former medieval plots in place (Figure 3). To east of the Sun Inn were two adjoining buildings, one of these – No 11 Walker Street – was a dispensary (Chemist). At this time the Sun Inn flanked the western side of an enclosed rectangular courtyard that was utilised by No. 11 Walker Street. A series of

[1] The bench mark is probably covered over with the current pebble-dash render

[2] Commissioned by the Duke of Sutherland and drawn by John Wood.

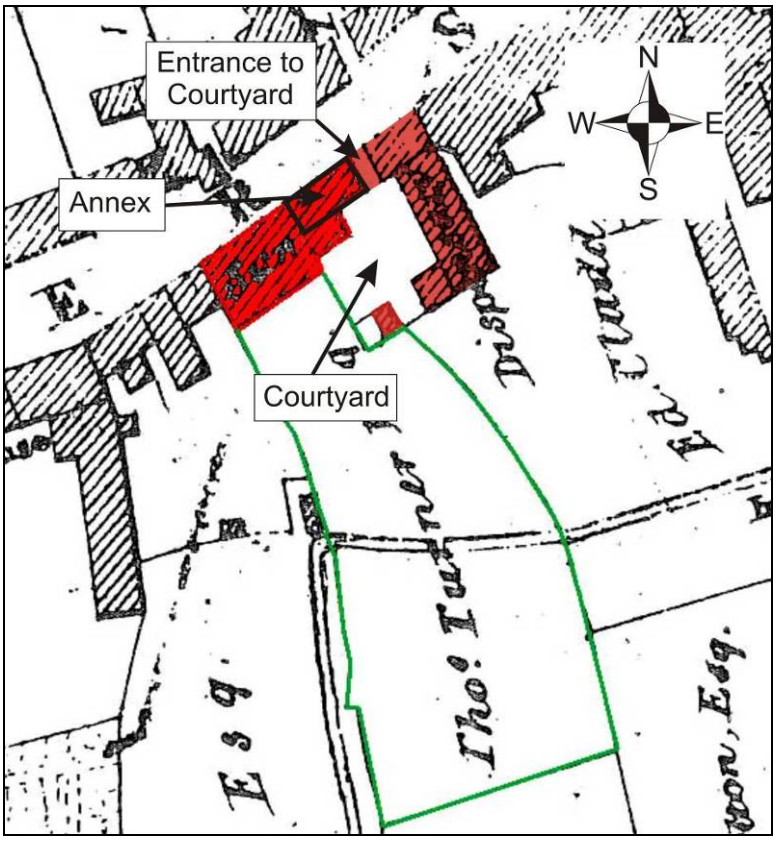
[3] The adjoining building east of Edgbaston House appears to be without a number.

structures to the rear of the courtyard were also present and access to the courtyard was via an opening between Nos. 11 and the Sun Inn; later this access became covered.

The plots either side of Walker Street are shown on the 1831 map as long narrow rectangular parcels of land and typical of the medieval burgage plot layout. However, during the early to mid 19th century a number of the original plots, including the plot to rear of Edgbaston House, were radically altered to form larger and irregular parcels of land. At this time Edgbaston House (the Sun Inn) and the rear plot was in the ownership of Thomas Turner [Esq.] (Figure 4). The rear plot appears to have previously been two rectangular plots, the eastern plot belonging to No. 11 Walker Street. The same plot complex, along with plots immediately located to the east appears to have been cut by a culverted watercourse.

**Figure 3: Map of 1831 showing the ownership of the plots along Walker Street**

**Figure 4: Detail of the 1831 map showing Edgbaston House and neighbouring properties (in red) and the rear plot (in green)**




Later maps show very little change to the line of Walker Street, although there are some radical changes to the building stock either side of the street such as a brewery replacing the work house, and these include structural changes to Nos. 9 and 11 Walker Street. On the 1st Edition Ordnance Survey map of 1882, No. 11 Walker Street has been expanded considerably to the rear; however, the form and use of the building extension is unclear. New businesses marked on this map include a brewery (with well) which is located and incorporating the building range of the former Union Work House, and a malthouse, located opposite Edgbaston House (belonging to the Wrekin Brewery). To the rear (north) of the malthouse is the main Market Hall and Potato Market, and both survive today (Figure 5).

**Figure 5: 1st edition Ordnance Survey map of 1882**

**showing Walker Street and the south-western corner of the medieval town form**


During the 20th century the form of the rear plot belonging to Edgbaston House and the courtyard to the rear of No. 11 Walker Street remains largely unchanged (Figure 6). The Ordnance Survey maps of 1927 and 1937 (scale 1: 2500) show little or no change to the building lines within Walker Street. However, one addition marked on both maps is a library building (constructed c. 1910) located west of Edgbaston House. Between Edgbaston House and the library building and during this period is a newly formed walkway which leads to a public bathhouse. This building replaced a series of buildings that were located along the boundary of a former burgage plot.

**Figure 6: 4th edition OS map of 1927**

**showing walkway and library building immediately west of Edgbaston House**


The National Grid maps of 1959 and 1974-5 show that despite the radical changes to the building stock many of the former building lines have been respected. To the west of Edgbaston House and the library, the former brewery buildings have been replaced by County Court Offices. On the opposite side of Walker Street a purpose-built Royal Mail sorting Office had been constructed some time after 1927. The National Grid map of 1974-5 (scale 1:10,000) shows much change to the rear building sections of Nos. 11 and 13 Walker Street and their respective rear plots. In this instance, much of the evidence of the former medieval burgage plot layout has largely disappeared. The former rear plots belonging to No. 9 and 11 Walker Street appear to have been covered with shrubbery and trees.

## 5.0 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

The aim of the site investigation was to provide information on the presence or absence and condition of any archaeological remains at the site, and to assist in the formulation of a strategy for the further treatment of these remains as necessary.

The stated objectives of the site works were:

- to excavate and record up to 9 archaeological trial trenches
- to recover all artefacts and, where necessary, structural or palaeoenvironmental samples from deposits of potential significance

- to analyse the site records, artefacts and ecofacts
- to develop a deposit model for deposition and truncation across the site
- to produce a report on the outcome of the works (this report)
- to identify the significance of any archaeological remains to develop a strategy for any further investigation as necessary.

A watching brief was also carried out during demolition works to investigate any exposed deposits beneath floor slabs and wall footings.

The investigation was guided by the following research questions:

- What are the geological conditions at the site and what was the pre-development topography of the site?
- Is there any evidence for activity before the medieval period and what is its nature?
- Can anything be said about the date and form of medieval plot divisions?
- What types of activities occurred in the backplots of medieval Walker Street?
- Is there evidence for functional zoning in the medieval town?
- Is there any structural evidence for medieval buildings extending back from the street frontage? How deep are these remains what is the scale of damage from later phases of construction?

Two areas of greater archaeological potential were identified on completion of the site investigation. These were investigated in a second phase of trenching, to define the character of the deposits and record any remains identified.

## 6.0 METHODOLOGY

A first phase of trial trenching was carried out between 11th and 17th November 2009. The trenches were sited to sample key areas of archaeological potential within the development area, comprising the raised ground across the southern half of the site in use as car parking, and within the footprint of the former building complex behind Edgbaston House and Numbers 9 and 11 Walker Street.

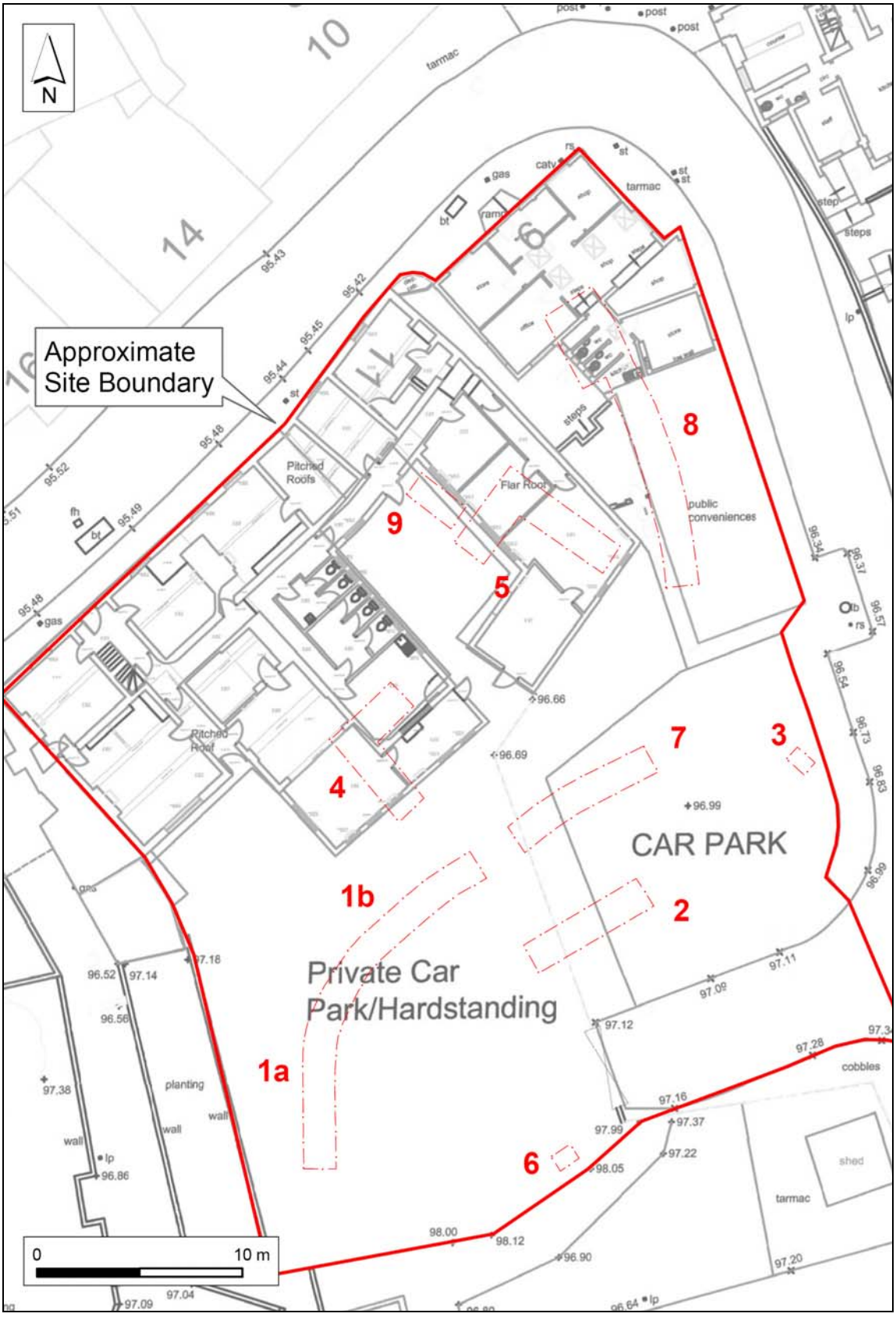
It was proposed to excavate up to 9 trial trenches in the first phase, but the trench plan had to be amended to account for access issues. The final trench plan therefore comprised 8 trenches representing a total investigation area of 106.68 sq m, approximately 10% of the development area.

Prior to the start of work the ground was scanned with a cable-avoidance tool. All of the trenches were opened using a 5 ton tracked mechanical excavator fitted with a 1.6m wide toothless grading bucket, or a 0.8m wide toothed ditching bucked for the smaller test pits. The machining was carried out under the supervision of a qualified archaeologist, with topsoil and archaeologically sterile overburden removed in spits until either significant archaeological deposits or the top of undisturbed natural geology were encountered.

The base of each trench and a representative section of the trench side was cleaned by hand (hoe/trowel) and examined for archaeological features wherever possible. The identified archaeological features were excavated stratigraphically by hand and recorded using a single context recording system. Accessible trenches were drawn to scale by hand (at scales of 1:20 and 1:50), with section drawings at scales of 1:10 and 1:20. The photographic record comprised high-resolution digital images with a supporting index. Measured sketches were made of inaccessible test pits and waterlogged trenches.

Although the first phase of investigation encountered extensive disturbance across the site, weather conditions had made it difficult to verify areas that might contain more ancient remains, and therefore a second phase of investigation was undertaken to inspect an area of deeper disturbed ground at the northern end of Trench 8, and a further trench excavated to the west immediately to the south of No 11 Walker Street (Trench 9). In addition the ground between Trenches 2 and 7 was stripped to investigate an area of apparently undisturbed garden soil. The final trench locations are indicated in Figure 7.

**Figure 7: Trench location plan with reference to former buildings on site**



# 7.0 RESULTS

## 7.1 Site Investigation

### *7.1.1 Trench 1a and 1b*

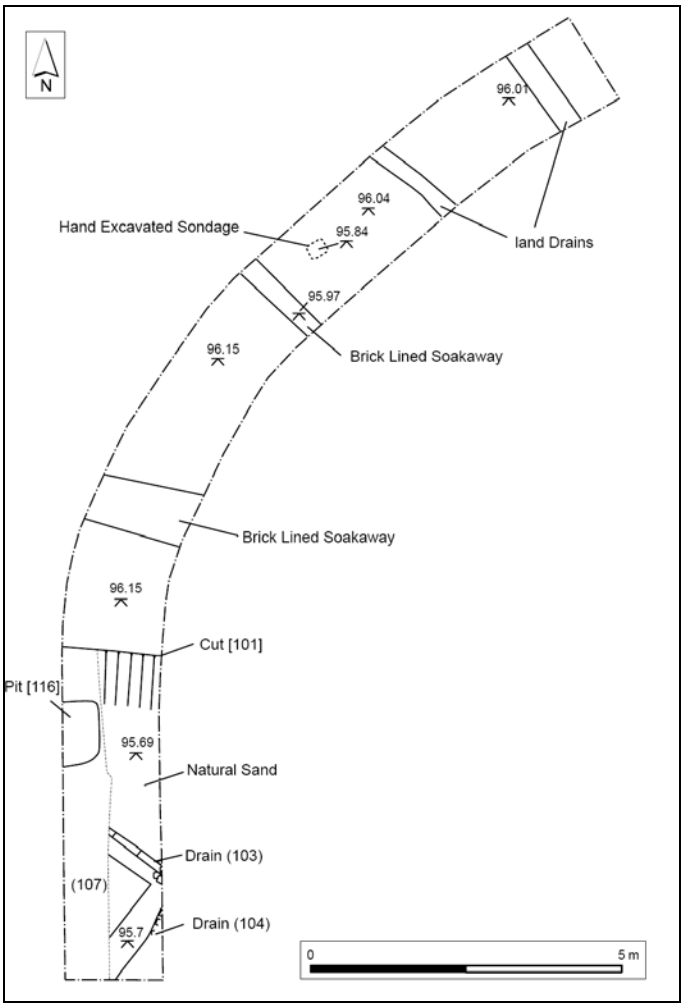
*Summary:*

No features of archaeological significance were encountered in this trench. To the south the ground level had been reduced and drainage inserted in the late 19th or 20th century. To the north the ground-reduction level was visible as a sharp interface between the clean natural sand and imported topsoil. A faint trace of former ground surface was noted in the north-western corner of the trench, with a tarmac layer 0.32m lower than the existing car park.

*Detail*

Trench 1 was excavated in the south-western corner of the site, within a raised area of former car parking to the rear of Edgbaston House (13 Walker Street). The trench was extended to make up for a shortfall in trenching elsewhere on the site, creating an 'L'-shaped trench 19m long and 1.6m wide. The first section ran for 10m northwards along the western site boundary (Trench 1a) before turning east for a further 9m (Trench 1b). The two sections of this trench are described separately below.

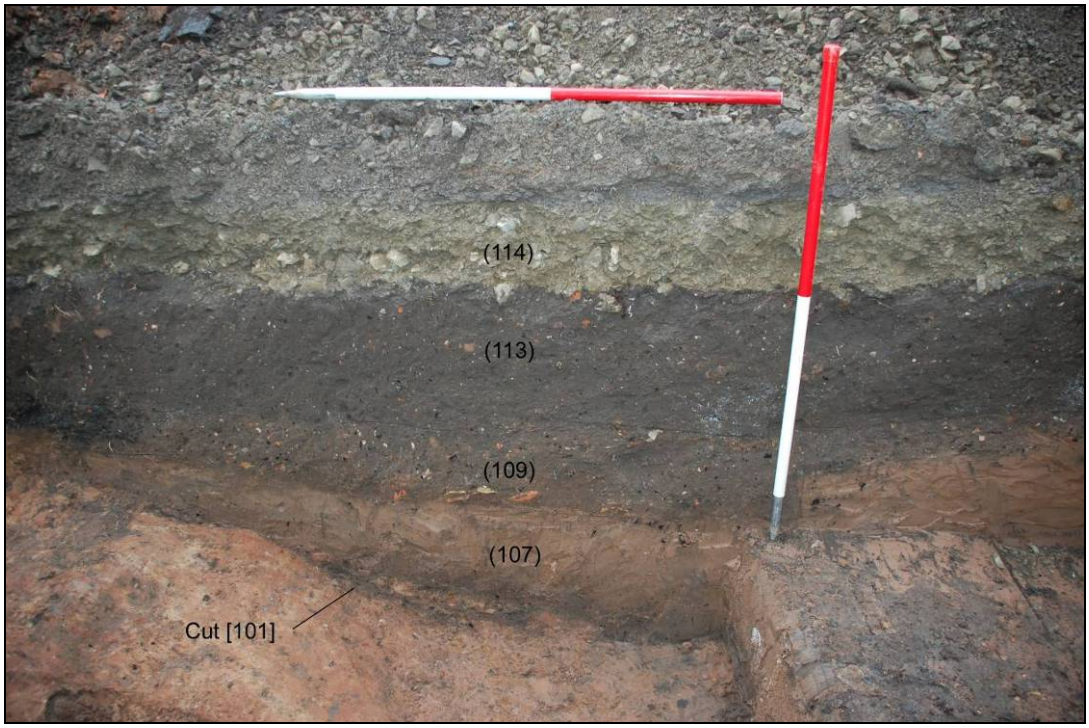
**Figure 8: Plan of Trench 1a and 1b**



*Trench 1a*

The base of Trench 1a was machine excavated to a depth of around 0.75m below the existing ground level (96.15m AOD). The natural sand was noted at a depth of 0.58m below the car park surface, however across the majority of the trench the natural sand had been cut down to a deeper level of 95.69m AOD (1.05m below the existing ground level) by an extensive, flat bottomed cut [101], which extended 4.9m from the southern end of the trench.

**Figure 9: Trench 1a facing east showing northern edge of cut [101]**




The base of cut [101] housed two post-medieval/modern drains. The first, (103), comprised a ceramic pipe encased in brick rubble and ran on a northwest-southeast alignment. At the eastern edge of the trench this drain converged with a second (104), also of brick rubble construction, running on a southwest-northeast alignment.

Cut [101] had been partially backfilled with redeposited garden soil (a grey silty clay) mixed with demolition rubble including wooden planks, brick and plaster to a depth of 0.16m (context 102). This also contained some fragments of animal bone and brown-glazed earthenware pottery of late 19$^{th}$ century date. All of the deposits within the cut were then sealed by a deep layer of clean brown clay up to 0.58m deep (107).

Layer (107) was sealed by a dark grey/brown silty clay 0.25m deep (109) which contained a distinct area of burning at its northern end (112) and had been cut by two shallow pits [111] and [116] which also contained burnt material (fills (111) and (117) respectively- the latter comprised 100% burnt paper).

All of the deposits described above were truncated to a depth of 96.44m AOD at the northern end of the trench, rising to 96.55m AOD at the southern end, and sealed by a homogenous deposit of dark grey/black mixed soil containing modern materials including metal and plastic (113). The deposit was around 0.3m deep and was completely sealed by a deposit of grey/purple shale hardcore (114) up to 0.25m deep which supported the modern car park surface of loose shale which was less than 30mm thick (115).

**Figure 10: Trench 1a facing northeast showing drains in base of cut [101]**

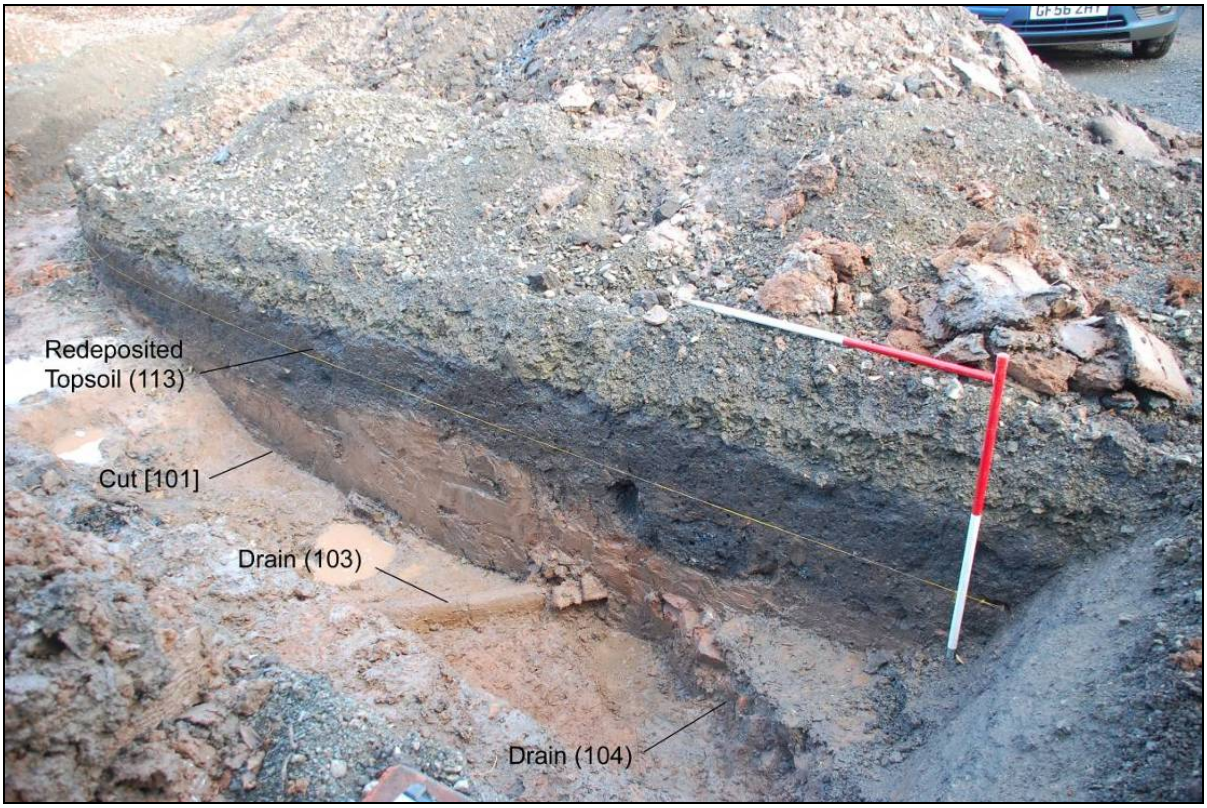
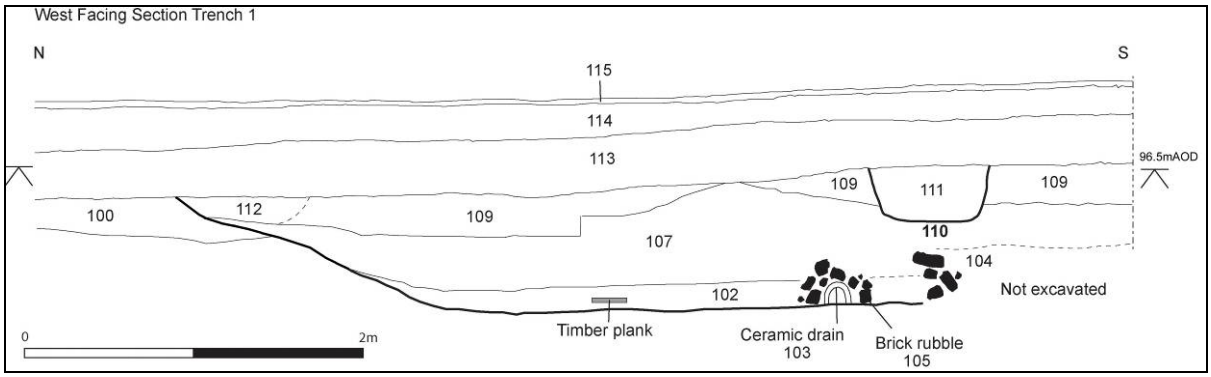



**Figure 11: West facing section, Trench 1a**

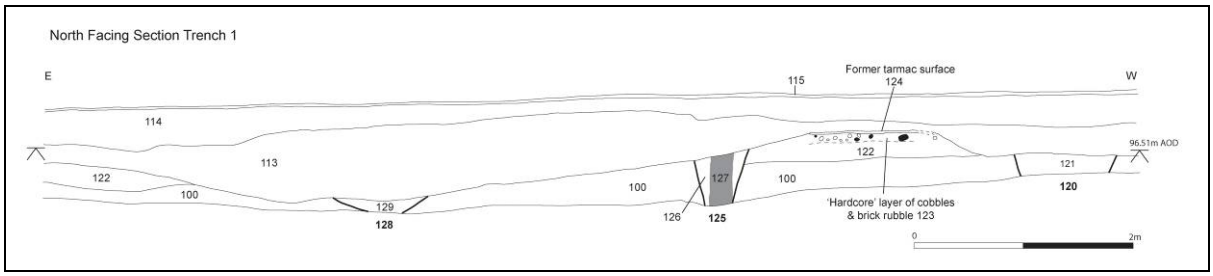



*Trench 1b*

The base of the trench was excavated to a depth of around 96m AOD, 1m below the existing ground level. The upper surface of the natural geology was encountered at a maximum height of 96.37m AOD, comprising a clean buff/orange sand containing pockets of coarser gravels and pebbles. A small hand-excavated sondage was cut into the natural to confirm its identification, reaching a depth of 95.84m AOD.

**Figure 12: Trench 1b facing southwest (note sharp interface at truncation horizon)**

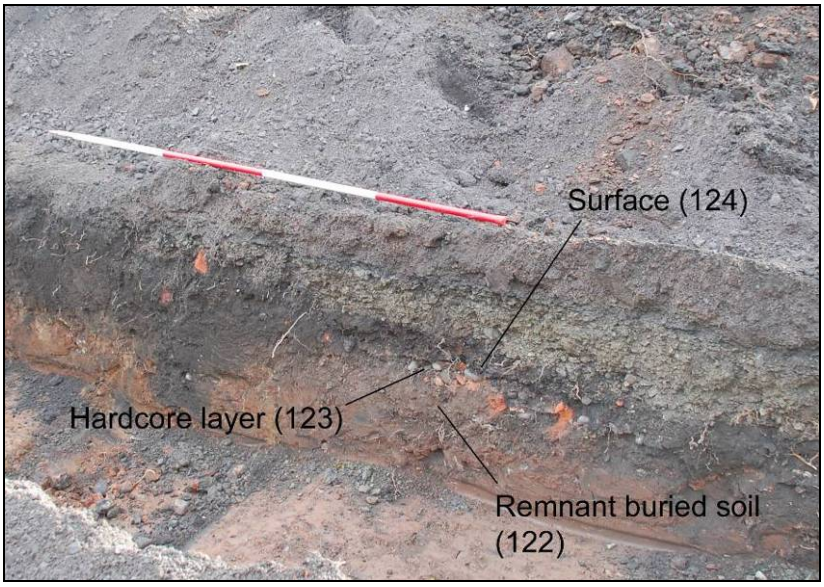

**Figure 13: North facing section, Trench 1b**




A possible remnant of surviving garden soil was encountered above the natural sand in two locations; at the extreme eastern end of the trench and at the western end along the inner corner of the trench (Figure 14 below). This soil was a grey clay-loam up to 0.22m deep with occasional fine lenses of sand (context 122). Along the inner corner of the trench this deposit was 2.1m wide and was sealed by a layer of cobbles and brick rubble (123) surmounted by a tarmac surface (124). This surface was recorded 0.32m below the existing ground level at a height of 96.65m AOD. It is likely that this surface represents a former yard or car park which has been truncated elsewhere.

Three drains cut the natural sand. The easternmost, cut [128] and fill (129) had a shallow concave profile and clay fill 0.9m wide and 0.12m deep, running on a north-south alignment. The second was located 2.25m to the west and comprised a steep-sided cut 0.5m deep and 0.48m wide (cut [125]). This was backfilled with brick-rubble surrounding a ceramic drainpipe and overlain with a black ashy fill (127) and packed with redeposited earth and sand (126). The third, cut [120], was located 2.4m further to the west and comprised a cut 0.94m wide with steep sides and over 0.2m deep backfilled with crushed brick rubble and overlain with a clean deposit of sand (121).

**Figure 14: Detail of former ground surface (124)**




Across the whole trench all of the underlying features were truncated along a single horizon which varied in depth from 0.38m to 0.9m below the existing ground level. For the most part this had removed all earlier deposits down to the natural geology, with the exception of the two patches of former garden soil. The horizon was marked by a sharp transition from the underlying deposits and natural sand to a dark grey/black mixed soil containing modern materials including metal and plastic (113). This deposit was up to 0.7m deep, the upper surface standing at around 96.81m AOD. This was completely sealed by a deposit of grey/purple shale hardcore (114) up to 0.38m deep which supported the modern car park surface of loose shale which was less than 30mm thick (115).

### *7.1.2 Trench 2*

*Summary*

Archaeological deposits were encountered in this trench. A sandstone wall footing had been constructed within a cut marking the boundary between Nos. 11 and 13 Walker Street. To the west was a remnant of surviving garden soil and a brick lined culvert. At the eastern end of the trench all earlier deposits had been removed by the deep construction cut for an overlying car park.

*Detail*

Trench 2 was situated at the southern edge of the site and to the east of Trench 1, positioned to cross the boundary between two areas of car parking which possibly represents a medieval burgage plot boundary. The trench was opened by machine and measured 6.3m x 1.6m oriented east-west.

Natural sand was observed in the base of the trench at a depth of 96.99m AOD. At the western end of the trench this was tested with a machine-excavated sondage to a depth of 0.75m which confirmed that it was undisturbed geology (context 200).

In the western half of the trench the base of an *in-situ* garden soil (201) was noted at intermittent points. This was up to 0.23m deep, appearing to deepen to the west. The soil had been cut through by two structural features; a wall footing and a brick-lined culvert.

**Figure 15: View of deposits at western end of Trench 2 facing north**

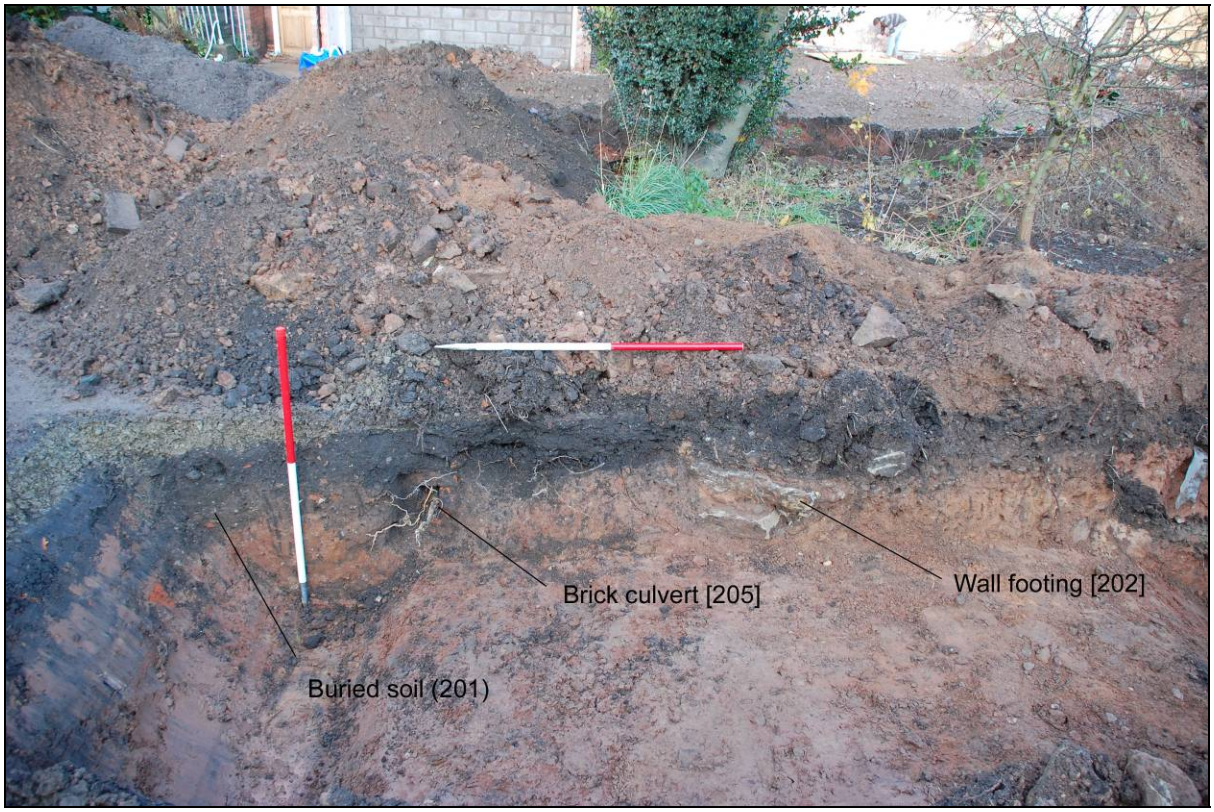
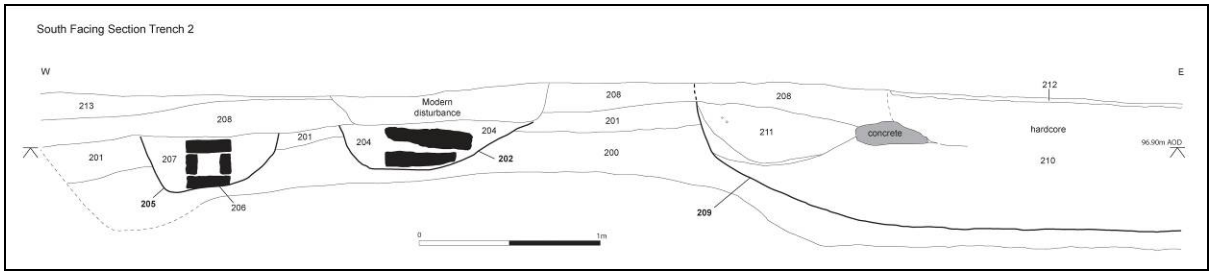



**Figure 16: South facing section, Trench 2**




Wall footing [202] was contained within a wide, shallow cut 1.05m wide and 0.4m deep, 1.7m from the western end of the trench and following the line of the boundary between the two car parks. The foundation stones for the wall were *in-situ*, comprising two courses of roughly shaped sandstone blocks (203) up to 0.5m across and 0.12m deep bonded with a pinkish lime mortar. The cut was backfilled with a pale brown silty loam (204), probably redeposited soil from the original excavation of the cut. This wall would most likely have been constructed at the same time as the southern perimeter wall (Figure 18) which still stands to a height of *c*. 4 courses, but has been re-capped with later coping. Directly above the line of the wall was a loose deposit of black silty clay and fly-tipped rubbish marking the position of the removed upper courses of stone.

**Figure 17: Wall footing [202] facing north**

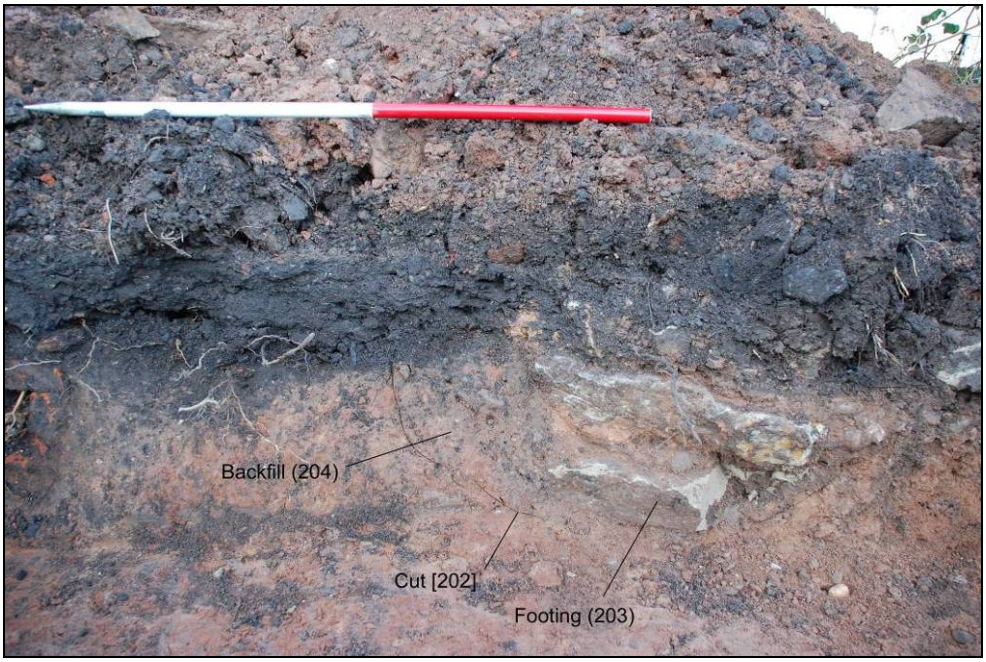
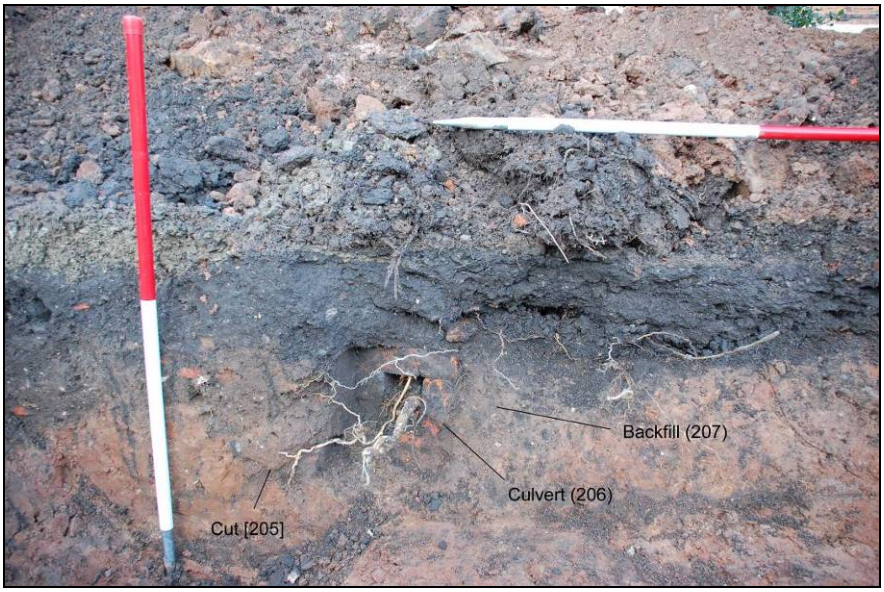



**Figure 18: View of southern perimeter wall- note sandstone basal courses**

A brick-lined culvert was situated 0.3m to the west of the wall footing, following the same north-south alignment. The cut [205] was 0.75m wide and 0.55m deep with steep sides and a flat base. The culvert was constructed from un-bonded bricks (206), with a single course laid stretcher-to-stretcher along the base, bricks laid on their edge forming the culvert walls and a further course of capping bricks. The cut was backfilled with mixed brown clay-loam (207), again probably redeposited garden soil. The culvert did not appear to function as it was dry and choked with roots from nearby trees.

**Figure 19: Culvert at western end of Trench 2 facing north**




The culvert and wall footing at the western end of the trench had been truncated at a depth of 0.23m below the existing ground surface, the ground having been levelled and redeposited garden soil (208) laid as a base for car park hardcore (213). These deposits reflect the sequence seen in Trench 1, with (208) equating to soil (113) and (213) equating to hardcore (114).

At the eastern end of the trench all earlier deposits had been completely truncated by the construction of a second car park. The ground below the car park was reduced to 96.37m AOD, 0.85m below the current ground level and 0.55m lower than the undisturbed surface of the natural sand to the west. The cut [209] had a vertical western face and gradual break of slope to a flat base. 0.7m of aggregate had been laid in the base (210), topped by a 20mm thick layer of tarmac (212). At the western edge of the car park a kerb had been set on a concrete base within a sand filled cut (Figure 20 below).

**Figure 20: Trench 2 eastern end, south facing section**

### *7.1.3 Trench 3*

*Summary*

No features or deposits of archaeological significance were encountered in this trench. This small test pit recorded the same deep sequence of car park deposits noted at the eastern end of Trench 2.

*Detail*

Trench 3 was excavated adjacent to the eastern site boundary within a car park area to confirm the sequence observed in Trenches 2 and 7. This trench was a machine-excavated test pit 1m x 0.8m in size, reduced from the intended plan as access to the car park was still required by site vehicles.

The sequence of deposits at the eastern end of Trenches 2 and 7 was confirmed. Natural sand was observed at a depth of 0.7m below the existing ground level (equivalent to 96.29m AOD), overlain with 0.5m of dark grey aggregate and 0.15m of pale grey hardcore topped with 50mm of tarmac. No archaeological features were observed, and it is likely the ground reduction for the car park's construction will have removed any former ground surface and shallow cut features.

**Figure 21: Trench 3 facing northwest**

### *7.1.4 Trench 4*

*Summary*

No archaeological features or deposits were encountered in this trench. Situated immediately to the rear of Edgbaston House, it is apparent that the construction of the overlying buildings in the 20th century removed any earlier deposits down to the surface of the natural sandy clay.

*Detail*

Trench 4 was an 'L'-shaped trench excavated to the south of Edgbaston House within the footprint of the recently demolished rear range of buildings. The trench measured 5.2m north-south and 4.1m east-west.

No archaeological remains were encountered in this trench. Natural waterlogged sandy clay was encountered at a depth of 95.6m AOD. This had been cut by two brick-built foundations marking the south-eastern corner of the modern buildings. To the northwest the ground had been disturbed to a depth of 95.38m AOD by modern drains.

The base of the trench was sealed by 0.3m of modern brick hardcore laid shortly after demolition of the buildings.

**Figure 22: Trench 4 facing north**

### *7.1.5 Trench 5*

*Summary*

No archaeological features or deposits were encountered in this trench. As with Trench 4 it appears that the construction of the overlying buildings in the 20th century (and possibly earlier) removed any pre-existing deposits down to the surface of the natural sandy clay.

*Detail*

Trench 5 was an 'L'-shaped trench excavated to the south of No 11 Walker Street, within the footprint of the recently demolished rear range of buildings. The trench measured 6.6m north-south and 4.6m east-west.

No archaeological remains were encountered in this trench. Natural waterlogged sandy clay was encountered at a depth of 95.31m AOD at the northern end of the trench, rising to 95.72m AOD in the south. The demolition works carried out shortly before the site investigation had completely removed modern foundations in this area. There was no indication of any earlier construction below these.

The trench was sealed by 0.3m of modern brick hardcore.

**Figure 23: Trench 5 facing north**

### *7.1.6 Trench 6*

*Summary*

No features or deposits of archaeological significance were encountered in this trench. The ground had been disturbed to a depth of 1.15m reflecting the deep truncation seen elsewhere in the south-western corner of the site.

*Detail*

Trench 6 was excavated in the south-western part of the site adjacent to the southern site boundary. This trench was a machine-excavated test pit 1m x 0.8m in size.

Natural sand was encountered in the base of the trench at a depth of 1.15m below the existing ground level (96.35m AOD). The sand was sealed by a deposit of clean brown loamy soil 0.3m deep containing natural (?) fragments of sandstone, overlain by a lens of clean buff sand 0.1m deep. This was in turn sealed by 0.4m of dark brown sandy loam containing brick rubble and 0.35m of loose friable topsoil. The ground surface was recorded at 97.5m AOD.

The deep disturbance in this trench suggests that the extensive truncation seen in Trench 1 extends across the whole car park area.

**Figure 24: Trench 6 facing southwest**

### *7.1.7 Trench 7*

*Summary*

Archaeological remains were encountered in this trench. These comprised the cut and footing for a sandstone wall which formed the boundary between Nos. 11 and 13 Walker Street. It is thought that the wall dates from the 19th century, but that it probably marks an earlier medieval boundary of which there are no physical remains. At the eastern end of the trench all earlier deposits had been removed by the construction cut for an area of car parking.

*Detail*

Trench 7 was situated to the north of Trench 2, positioned to cross the boundary between two areas of car parking which may mark the location of a medieval burgage plot boundary. The trench measured 8m x 1.6m in plan, oriented east-west.

Natural sand (700) was seen at the western end of the trench at a height of 96.84m AOD. It had been cut by a wide shallow cut for a sandstone built wall [701] (same as [202] in Trench 2). This was 1m wide and over 0.3m deep. The wall was oriented southwest-northeast, crossing the western end of the trench for a distance of 2m. As in Trench 2 there were two courses of stone surviving, comprising roughly shaped blocks of yellow/buff sandstone up to 0.45m across and 0.2m deep bonded with a pink lime mortar (702). The upper courses of the wall had been removed, and a modern topsoil (713) covered the western end of the trench to a depth of 0.14m.

All deposits at the eastern end of the trench had been completely removed by the construction cut for the eastern car park. The base of the cut was recorded at 96.44m AOD, 0.64m below the existing ground level. No archaeological features were observed in the base of the trench. A layer of grey/brown hardcore lined the base of the cut to a depth of 0.5m, and was overlain by 0.12m of grey hardcore and 40mm of tarmac. Along the western edge of the car park a kerb was set in concrete within a cut 1.2m wide and 0.42m deep filled with sand and redeposited earth.

**Figure 25: Trench 7 Plan**

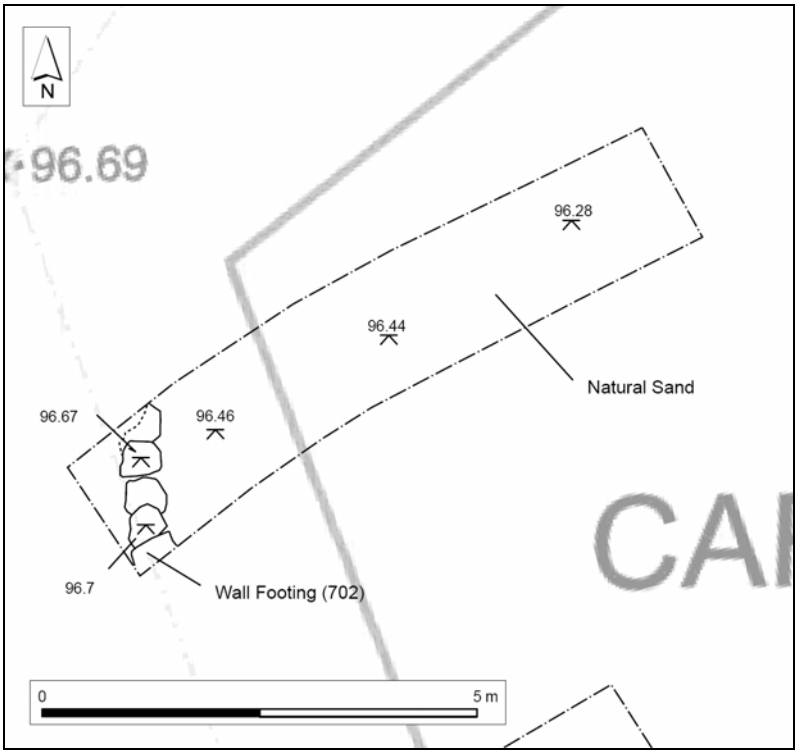
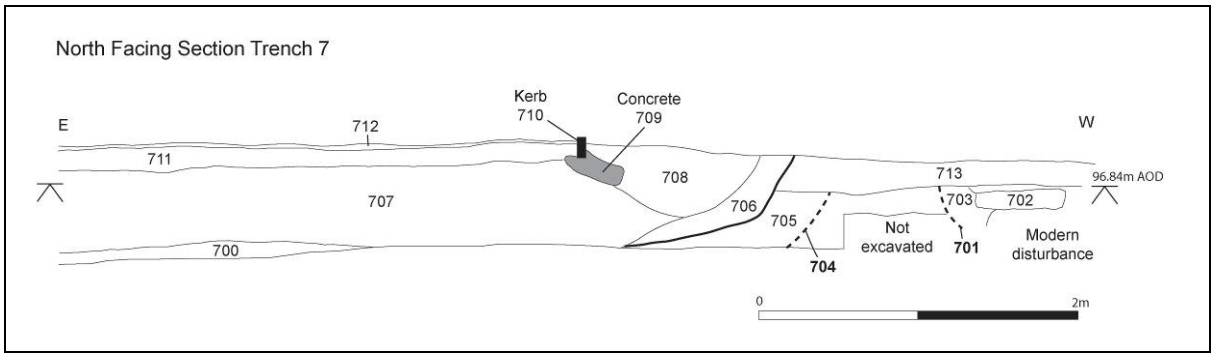



**Figure 26: Trench 7 facing southeast showing deep truncation by car park deposits**

**Figure 27: Wall footing [701] at western end of Trench 7 facing southwest**

**Figure 28: North facing section, Trench 7**




Following the first phase of site investigation the line of wall (702) was traced southwards to Trench 2, and the ground cleared to either side. This exposed a narrow strip of undisturbed garden soil that had been unaffected by the construction of the car parks. No significant archaeological material was encountered (either as cut features or stray artefacts in the soil) which may indicate a general lack of activity in this area, though as a sample excavation the area was too small to draw meaningful conclusions.

**Figure 29: View to north along wall (702)**

### *7.1.8 Trench 8*

*Summary*

Significant archaeological remains were encountered in this trench. A multi-phase ditch crossed the northern end of the trench running parallel to Walker Street. The first phase ditch was narrow and ran across the trench towards No 11 Walker Street. The second phase ditch was wider, terminating at a curved end within the trench boundary. The ditch fill comprised a cess deposit of grey silt and animal waste, possibly industrial waste from Tan Bank. A single sherd of medieval pot from the fill of the ditch places it's infilling to around the 13$^{th}$-14$^{th}$ century. Truncation caused by the construction of overlying buildings in the post medieval period had removed any relationship between the ditches and contemporary ground surfaces. These ditches have only been sample excavated, and a fuller programme of recording will be necessary in the future, during Regeneration Phases 2 and 3.

*Detail*

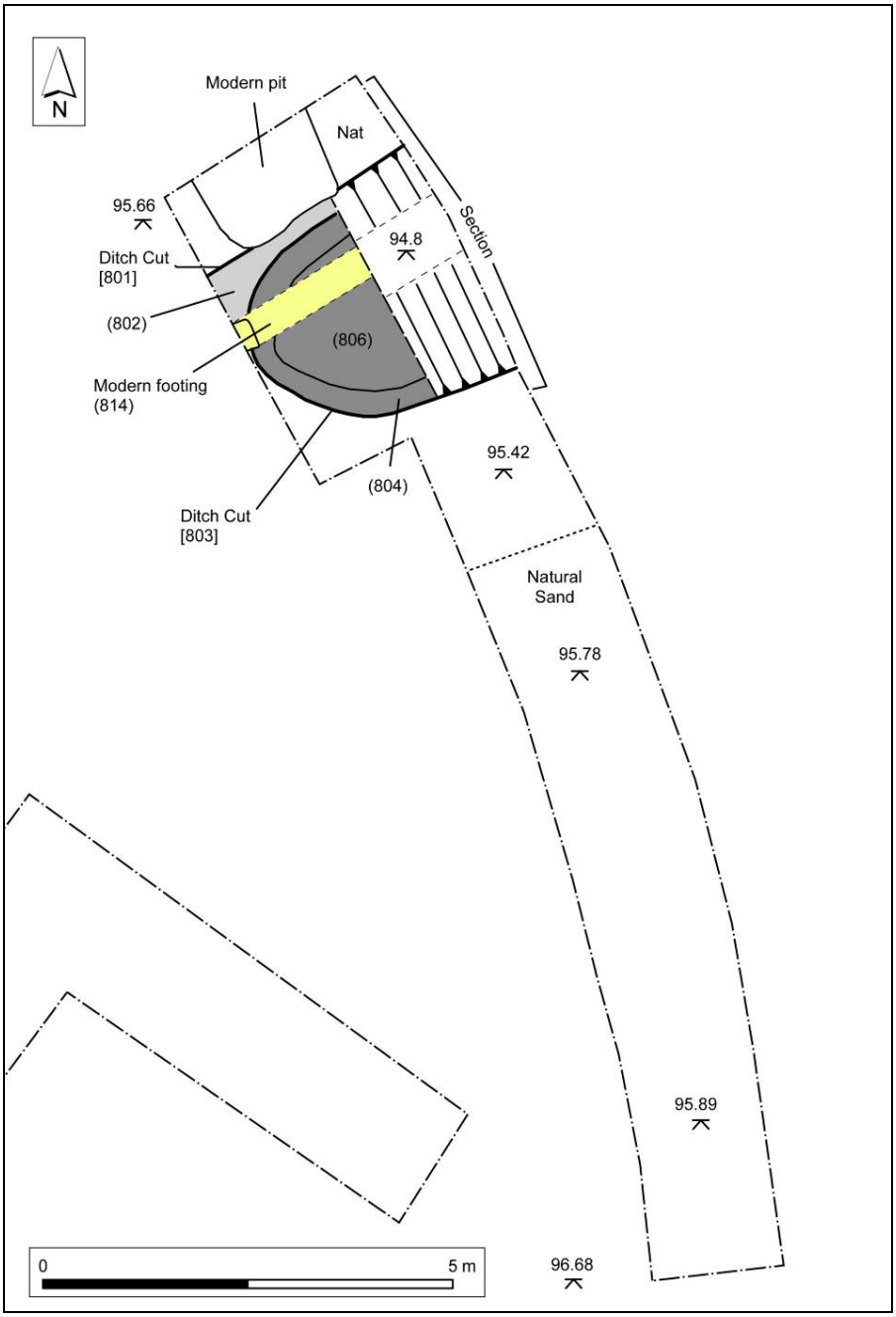
Trench 8 was excavated along the eastern edge of the site to the rear of Number 9 Walker Street and in the location of a former public convenience. The trench measured 15m x 1.6m oriented north-south, curving slightly to the west at the southern end to avoid supports for timber hoarding erected along the site boundary.

Natural sandy clay was seen in the base of the trench at a depth of 95.89m AOD in the south, dipping to 95.42m AOD in the north.

At the northern end of the trench an area of deep disturbed ground 4m wide and 0.86m deep was seen, containing dark grey/black silty clay, brick rubble and timbers. The presence of water in this area precluded detailed investigation during the first phase of work, however as part of the second phase the trench was pumped dry and the area enlarged to investigate the disturbance in more detail. This identified a large ditch oriented approximately northeast-southwest, with two clear phases of construction.

The first phase, ditch [801], comprised a 'U'-shaped cut at least 1.2m wide and 0.65m deep. This ran for an observed length of 3m across the trench, passing beneath the western section and continuing towards the rear of No 11 Walker Street. The fill (802) was a homogenous pale grey silty clay containing no artefacts, but it was waterlogged with visible remains of root/plant tissue. Sample 1 was recovered from this deposit for assessment of its bioarchaeological potential, which demonstrated the presence of animal dung, human faeces and rotting vegetable matter typical of cess-pit like conditions (see Section 8.0 below).

**Figure 30: Plan of Trench 8 (See Figure 31 for section)**



The second phase of construction comprised a larger ditch cut [803], at least 2.5m wide and 0.9m deep. This ran into the trench from the east for a distance of 3m before terminating at a curving butt-end. In the base of the ditch were two shallow deposits of wet silt (804) and (805) totalling 0.14m in depth. These fills probably represent the gradual silting-up of the ditch when first open. Above (805) was a homogenous dark grey fill (806), 0.46m deep comprising soft, dark silt. This fill was very wet and contained a significant quantity of cattle horn cores and animal bone. A single fragment of medieval pot with a bright green glaze (fine whiteware) was recovered from this fill dated to the 13th-14th century. A lens of darker silt 60mm thick (807) overlay fill (806), and this was in turn sealed by an upper fill of mixed brown loam (808) 0.27m deep. Sample 2 was recovered from fill (806) which identified a faunal assemblage similar to that of fill (802), i.e. cess pit-like conditions, however lime appeared to have been added to the waste in order to control the smell and flies (see Section 8.0 below).

Within the line of the ditch was a later cut [813] containing brick rubble. It seems probable that this represents an attempt to stabilise the soft ground for an overlying wall footing, though at the time of the excavation all overlying structures had been demolished. Along with this cut, a series of post medieval or modern pits to the north ([809], [811]) and a truncation horizon to the south (815) had effectively removed any evidence for a relationship between the ditches and a contemporary ground surface.

**Figure 31: West Facing Section, Trench 8**

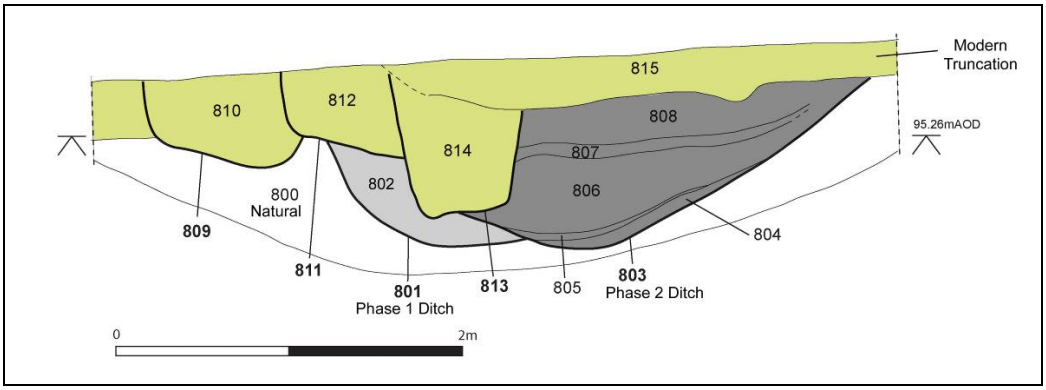



**Figure 32: Northern end of Trench 8 facing north showing principal features**

### *7.1.9 Trench 9*

*Summary*

Significant archaeological remains were discovered in this trench, comprising a timber lined well or latrine and two rubbish pits, one of which contained pottery dated to the late medieval period (15th-16th century). The features are likely to be associated with the original use of No 11 Walker Street, at which time the ditch in Trench 8 to the west had fallen out of use. These features have only been briefly sampled and full recording will be necessary in the future.

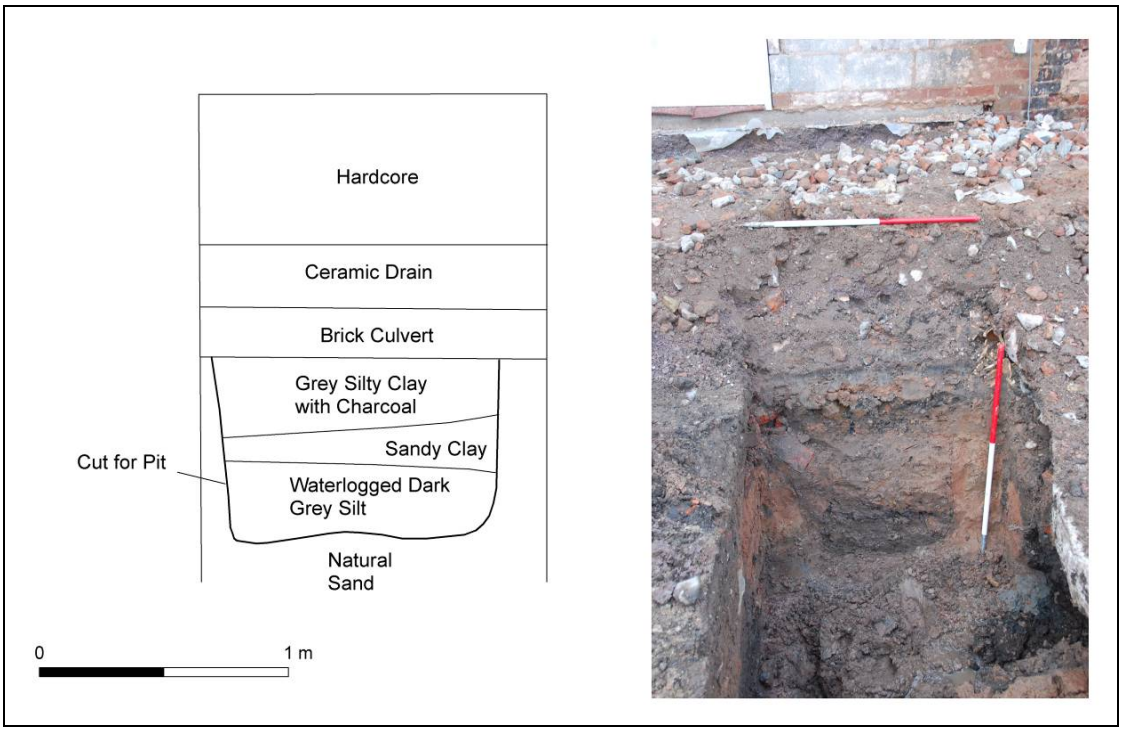
*Detail*

Trench 9 was a small test pit excavated by mini digger measuring 1.1m x 2.7m. It was opened during the second phase of trenching. The purpose of the test pit was to investigate whether the ditch seen at the northern edge of Trench 8 continued to the rear of No 11 Walker Street; accordingly the pit was excavated between Trench 5 (in which no evidence for a ditch was seen) and the rear wall of No 11.

Because of the depth of the pit and instability of the trench edges the features were recorded remotely with photographs and measured sketches. The section drawings below are schematic and based on the measurements taken.

The natural geology comprised soft yellow sand and was observed at a depth of 0.8m below the existing ground level. This had been cut into by three archaeological features. In the northern section of the trench was a vertically-sided pit with a flat base 1.1m wide and 0.7m deep. This contained three fills: a waterlogged dark grey silt in the base containing wood fragments, sealed by a layer of mid brown sandy clay and finally a charcoal-rich layer of grey silty clay. The top of the pit had been truncated by the cut for a brick-lined culvert 0.2m deep, which was in turn sealed by a modern ceramic drain 0.25m thick and a layer of modern hardcore 0.6m deep.

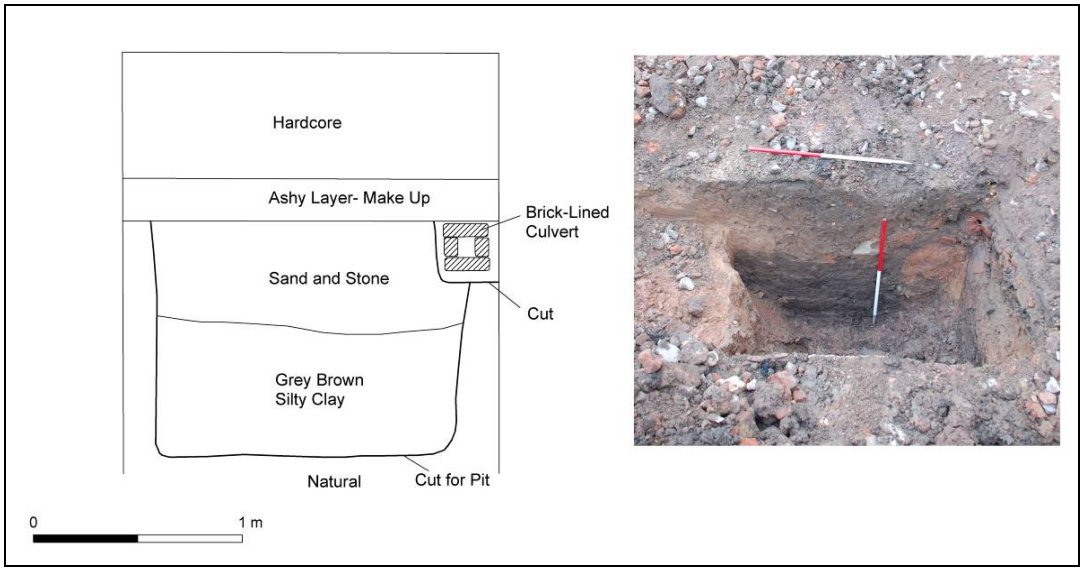
**Figure 33: South facing section (schematic), Trench 9**




In the western edge of the trench was a second pit with vertical sides and a flat base. This was 1.6m wide and 1.1m deep. The basal fill was a grey/brown silty clay which was partially excavated to show a clean edge against the natural sand and a single sherd of medieval pot was recovered, identified as

'gritty ware' and most likely of late medieval date (15th-16th century). This was overlain by a fill of sand and occasional stones. A layer of ashy material 0.2m thick overlay the pit, which is almost certainly the make-up layer for a cobbled courtyard surface seen during the watching brief (see below). This was in turn sealed by 0.6m of modern hardcore.

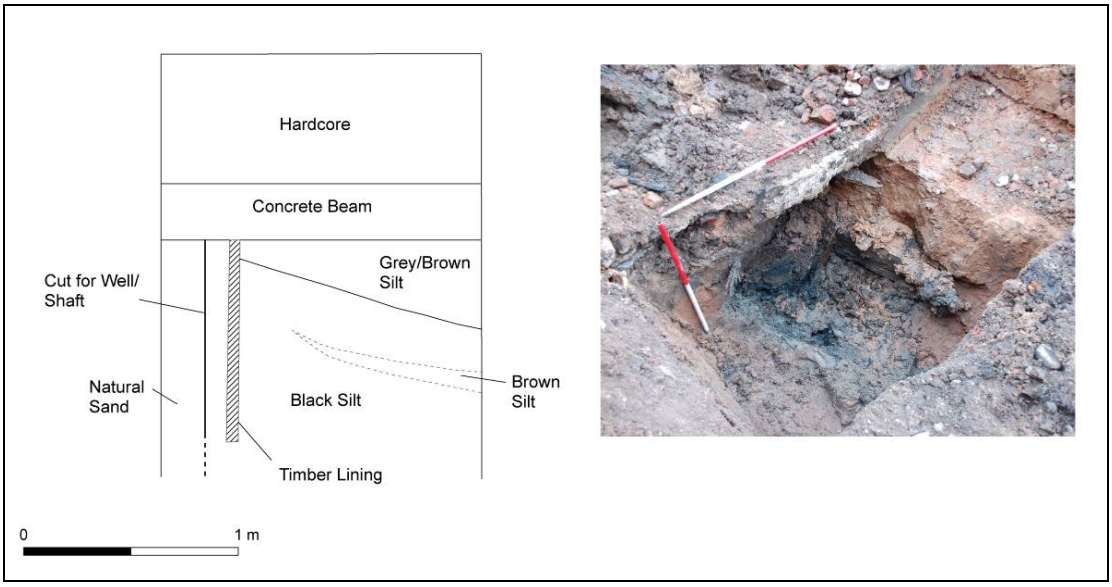
**Figure 34: East facing section (schematic), Trench 9**




In the eastern edge of the trench was a timber-lined shaft, possibly a well or latrine. The shaft was square in plan with each side at least 0.7m long, and vertical sides over 1m deep. The cut was lined with a timber lattice, the exact construction of which could not be determined from the trench edge. A single timber was recovered for assessment of its potential for dating by dendrochronology (see below). A layer of soft grey silt had formed between the timber lining and the outer cut of the well, possibly a deliberate backfill, or possibly leached material from within the shaft.

The fills of the feature comprised an almost structureless black sludge with a lens of green brown silt and an upper fill of grey/brown silt. No artefacts were observed. The upper extent of the feature had been truncated by a footing for the modern rear wing of No 11 Walker Street, with a 0.25m thick concrete beam sealing the features and an overlying layer of hardcore 0.6m thick making up the existing ground surface.

**Figure 35: West facing section (schematic), Trench 9**

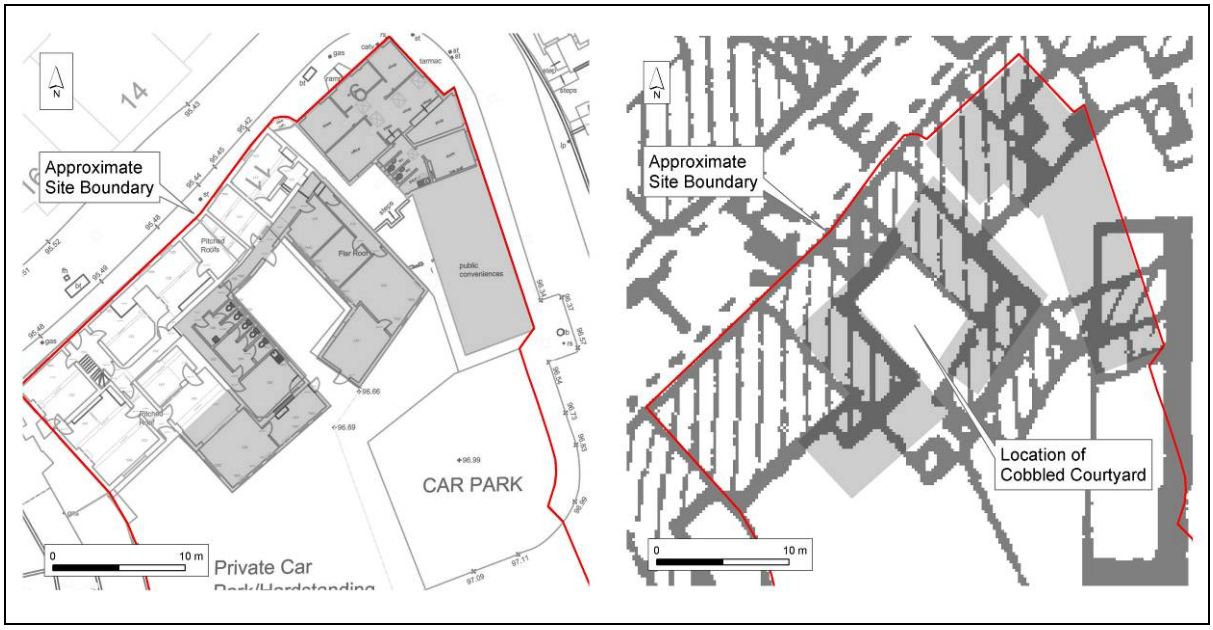


## 7.2 The Watching Brief

A watching brief was carried out during ground clearance works to the rear of Nos 9 - 13 Walker Street at the beginning of November 2009.

The demolition programme comprised removal of the 20th century buildings (indicated in Figure 36 below), after which a uniform layer of crushed brick rubble hardcore was laid. The modern structures had replaced a range of post medieval buildings arranged around a courtyard shown on historic maps of the site.

**Figure 36: Location of demolished buildings (shaded grey) with reference to the modern site layout and the 1902 Ordnance Survey data**




Within the footprint of the 20th century buildings all traces of earlier ground surfaces and structures had been removed, leaving only natural geology. The exception was in the courtyard area, where a 30mm thick layer of tarmac was stripped back to reveal a cobbled surface. The cobbles were up to 120mm in diameter and had been set on a thin make-up layer of ashy soil. The surface had been badly damaged by the insertion of services across the area in later periods and some of the cobbling had been deliberately removed, but the approximate dimensions of the yard surface were c 7.75m north-south and 5m east-west (Figures 37 and 38). The courtyard would originally have been accessed via a passageway through No 11 Walker Street.

The ground reduction carried out as part of the demolition did not extend deep enough to expose the truncated medieval deposits later seen in Trench 9, which were sealed by the courtyard cobbling.

**Figure 37: View of cobbled courtyard facing northwest**

**Figure 38: Detail of cobbled courtyard surface, facing east**

## 8.0 ASSESSMENT OF THE ENVIRONMENTAL SAMPLES

(Emma Kitchen and Dr Ben Gearey MIfA)

### *8.1.1 Introduction*

Birmingham Archaeo-Environmental was contracted by SLR Consulting Ltd to carry out a palaeoentomological assessment of two bulk samples of material from an archaeological site at Edgbaston House, Wellington. The samples comprised a sandy organic silt deposit collected from the ditch of a possible medieval burgage plot. This report discusses potential of these samples and makes recommendations for future investigation. This assessment was carried out in order to establish the following:

- Are insect remains present? If so, are they of interpretative value?
- Do the insect faunas recovered indicate the nature of the depositional environment and the wider landscape?

- Is there potential for further palaeoenvironmental analyses of these deposits?

### *8.1.2 Methods*

Two 10 litre samples were processed using the standard method of paraffin flotation as outlined by Kenward *et al* (1980). The samples were sorted using a low-power binocular microscope. Identifications were made to species level where possible, using the Gorham and Girling insect collection located in Birmingham University. The insects recovered from both samples were very well preserved. Both produced a reasonably sized fauna (Table 1). The distribution of individuals among the species was relatively even.

### *8.1.3 Results*

*Sample 1- context 802*

The sample produced a considerable number of synanthropic species (individuals dependent upon or closely associated with anthropogenic environments). *Xylodromus concinnus* is exclusively synanthropic being found in hay refuse. *Latridius minutus* is highly synanthropic and is found in association with stables and sheds. It would thus appear that hay had been dumped in the deposit along with animal dung, as indicated by the species *Oxytelus rugosus*, *Cryptophagus, Apion* sp, *Atomaria* sp and *Ptinus fur.* The deposit also contained decaying wood and rotting vegetable waste, as suggested by *Aleochara geutsppwdet* and *Anobium puncatum*. *Lesteva longoelytrata* and *Leistus* sp also suggest the deposit may have been in close proximity to cultivated soil. Perhaps unsurprisingly, the presence of wet, muddy conditions is suggested by *Philonthus* sp. The deposit produced a considerable number of *Thoracochaeta zosterea* diptera (fly) larvae cases. This small fly, whose larvae develop in wet cesspit fills, is often found in archaeological deposits ranging from Saxon to the 18th Century (Belshau 1989).

*Sample 2- Context 806*

This sample also produced a considerable number of synanthropes including the species recorded in the previous sample *Xylodromus concinnus,* and *Latridius minutus* which are indicative of hay refuse. A number of species such as *Cercyon unipuntatus*, *Omalium* sp, *Cryptophagus* sp. are associated with compost heaps and decaying matter, including carrion. Only one species *Cercyon atricapillus* is solely associated with animal dung. Wet and muddy substrates are indicated by the presence of *Stenus* sp., *Philonthus* sp. and

*Pterostichus* sp. Decaying wood and leaf litter was also a component of the deposit as indicated by *Tachinus* sp, *Anobium puncatum* and *Anaspis* species. The deposit produced seven *Thoracochaeta zosterea* diptera (fly) larvae cases, which still contained the developing fly. This suggests that lime was placed in the deposit which counteracted the natural growth cycle of the fly. This may also explain the presence of *Melagethes* sp., which is found in calcareous pastures.

### *8.1.4 Discussion*

Both samples produced similar faunal assemblages that are typical of urban archaeological cesspit deposits. Although there are some differences in the overall species list, the ecological setting which they inhabit is fundamentally the same. Overall it can be concluded that the deposits included dumped waste material which had created a 'liquid cess-pit' environment in the ditch. Other material probably dumped into the feature included rotting hay waste, animal dung, decaying wood, carrion and decomposing vegetable waste. The conditions within the ditch were very probably putrid and due to the presence of *Thoracochaeta zosterae* are likely to have contained human faeces. Both samples provide an indication that cultivated soil was in close proximity to the site. Interestingly it appears that some form of cesspit 'control' was used in sample 2, but not in sample 1. It is likely that this control was lime, which is commonly used in cesspits to minimize both the smell and development of fly larvae. The samples provide only limited evidence regarding the wider environment, although cultivated land may have been close by.

### *8.1.5 Conclusions and Recommendations*

Both samples produced well preserved and reasonably sized faunal assemblages suggesting high potential for further palaeoenvironmental investigation of deposits from this site. The fauna contain clear indicators of fetid cesspit-like conditions with waste from animal stabling, rotting hay and dung, vegetable waste, carrion, human faeces and rotting wood are all suggested by the insect fauna. Sample 2 (context 806) produced evidence for the deposition of lime, most probably indicating some anthropogenic control of fly development and foul smells within the cesspit. Further sampling at the site would enable a more in-depth assessment of the nature of sediment accumulation and anthropogenic activity at the site.

## 9.0 THE POTTERY

(Ben Jervis MA PIFA)

Two sherds were submitted for assessment. They are described by context below:

### *9.1.1 Trench 8, Context (806)*

A single, small sherd (2g) was present. This is a sandy, fine whiteware with an exterior bright green glaze. There are common silt sized (fine) sub-rounded quartz inclusions and sparse, sub-rounded iron rich clay pellets. It is probably from a jug. Similar fabrics are known from the Bull Ring site in Birmingham (Rátkai 2001, 98-9), where they date from the 13th-14th centuries. This is suggested as an appropriate date for this sherd.

### *9.1.2 Trench 9 Unstratified*

A single unstratified sherd from one of the medieval pits in Trench 9 was present (65g). This was a coarse, buff/pink coloured ware with a patchy internal green glaze. There are common, rounded medium-fine sized quartz inclusions with sparse, sub-angular, coarse sized sandstone fragments, sparse iron rich flecks and common elongated voids (possibly from organic temper). The sherd is probably from a deep bowl or jar. Similar fabrics are known from the Bull Ring site in Birmingham (Rátkai 2001, 102) where they are termed ‘gritty wares’ and date to the 15th-16th centuries. This is the likely date for this sherd, which fits into this gritty ware tradition.

| Context | Ware type | Sherd Count | Sherd Weight (g) | Spot Date |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 806 | Iron-poor whiteware | 1 | 2 | c13th-14th |
| Trench 9 Unstratified | Gritty ware | 1 | 65 | c15th-16th |

No further work is required on this small assemblage.

## 10.0 THE TIMBER

A single oak timber was recovered from the well/latrine structure in Trench 9 and submitted to Ian Tyers (Sheffield) for an assessment of its potential to be dated through dendrochronology. The sample was prepared for analysis but there were not enough rings to obtain a date. It was also noted that the sample was predominantly heartwood, with little or no sapwood from near to the growing outer edge of the timber which is needed to provide a secure date of felling.

## 11.0 DISCUSSION

### 11.1 Overview

The results of the site investigation have shown that in the 19th and 20th centuries there was widespread truncation of earlier ground surfaces across the development area. This truncation resulted from the construction of buildings and areas of car parking in which the original ground level was substantially reduced. Intact stratified deposits were recorded in Trenches 8 and 9 (deep waterlogged medieval deposits cut below the surface of the natural sand) and in Trenches 2 and 7 where the former boundary between the backplots of numbers 11 and 13 Walker Street had been retained as a sub-surface feature.

### 11.2 Natural Geology and Topography

The drift geology confirmed by excavation is clean buff-orange sand with occasional pockets of coarser gravel. The original topography of the site prior to any landscaping appears to have risen gradually towards the south, and in Trench 8 this was seen distinctly rising from 95.42m AOD to 95.89m AOD over a distance of 11m. In Trenches 2 and 7 further to the south undisturbed natural was observed at a depth 96.99m AOD and 96.84m AOD respectively.

### 11.3 Buried Soils

Isolated patches of buried soil were seen in the southern half of the site. In Trenches 2 and 7 this was a thin deposit of light grey/brown silty loam up to 0.2m thick which graded imperceptibly at its base into the underlying natural sand. This principal area of survival was situated between two areas of car parking. A second buried soil was seen around 7m to the west in Trench 1, beneath a former tarmac surface 0.34m lower than the existing ground surface. Though only a small area of survival, this would indicate that an earlier surface had been in use which stood at 96.65m AOD prior to the creation of the existing car park.

The shallow depth of the buried soil might be an indication that any cut features of archaeological origin would have been located close to the surface, and are therefore likely to have suffered from episodes of later truncation. There were no archaeological features or artefacts in this soil to indicate activity prior to the post medieval/modern periods.

### 11.4 Property Boundaries

Property boundaries were recorded in Trenches 2, 7 and 8.

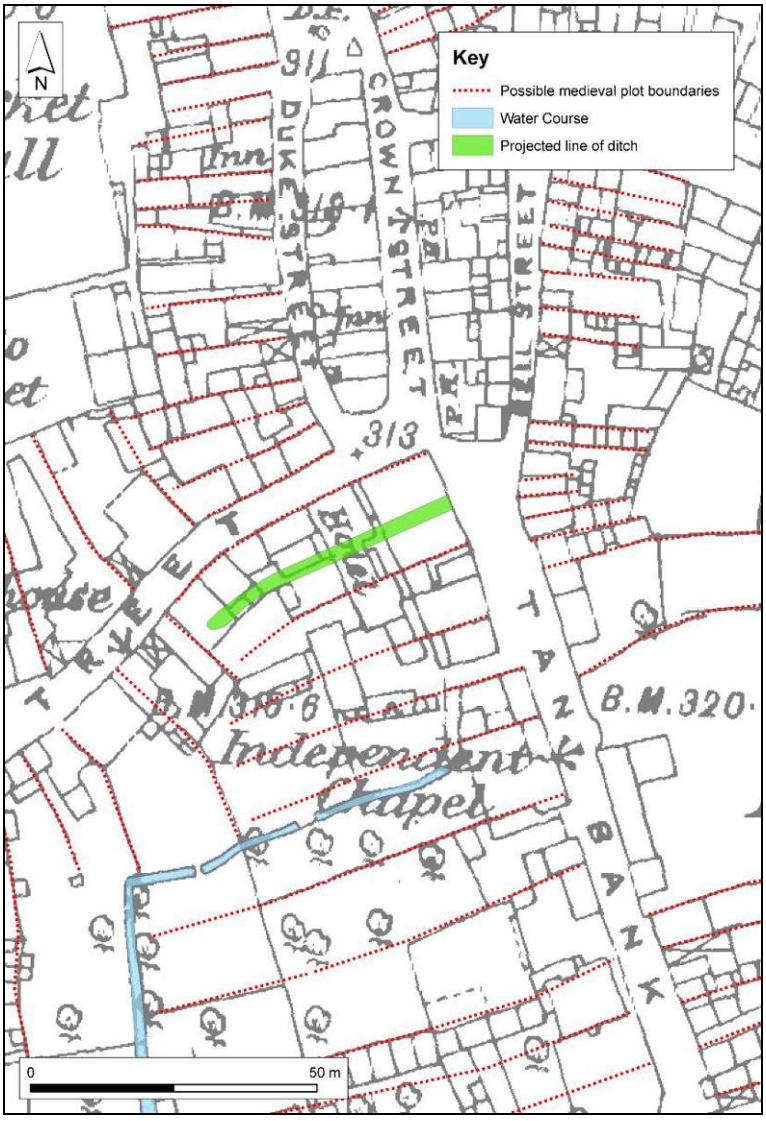
The earliest of these was a deep ditch seen at the northern end of Trench 8 running east-west around 9m to the south of Walker Street. The ditch had been excavated in two clear phases, the first appearing to have silted up before being re-excavated. The fill of the second phase ditch contained a large quantity of animal bone (predominantly cattle horn cores) which is likely to represent industrial waste derived from tanning/horn working activities on Tan Bank to the east, and although it is not possible to precisely date the ditch, the single pot sherd from the fill of the second phase gives a *terminus post quem* for infilling of between the 13th and 14th centuries AD.

The environmental samples assessed as part of this phase of work have indicated that both phases of ditch were infilled under urban conditions, with insect assemblages typical of cess-pits. Interestingly the presence of lime in the fill of the second phase ditch (used to inhibit smells and insect development) suggests that during the second phase infilling an attempt was being made to control the air quality in the town centre. It is possible that the lime was

added specifically to help deal with the decomposition of industrial animal waste from Tan Bank.

If the ditch extended in an unbroken line between Tan Bank and Trench 9, it would represent a plot length of around 45m, consistent with the linear extent of burgage plots at 9-12 perches (each perch approximately 5.03m- Towle and Hayes 2009, 39). The projected line of the ditch has been overlaid onto the 1882 Ordnance Survey map of Wellington, with other probable medieval plot boundaries highlighted in red (Figure 39 below). This suggests that the principal route through the town would have been from north-south, with properties radiating to the east and west of Tan Bank, Duke Street and Bell Street. Walker Street passes westwards between these plots, with north-south oriented properties (including No 11 Walker Street) to the rear of those fronting Tan Bank.

**Figure 39: Trench 9 Ditch in relation to probable medieval properties**




It is unclear how the later medieval pits and well/latrine uncovered in Trench 9 relate to the ditch, which clearly terminated at Trench 8 in its later phase. The single unstratified pottery sherd places these features towards the end of the medieval period (15th-16th century) so it seems likely that they were created after the ditch to the east had fallen out of use, and may be more closely associated with the construction and use of No 11 Walker Street. The depth and preservation of the archaeological remains in this area is such that further investigation

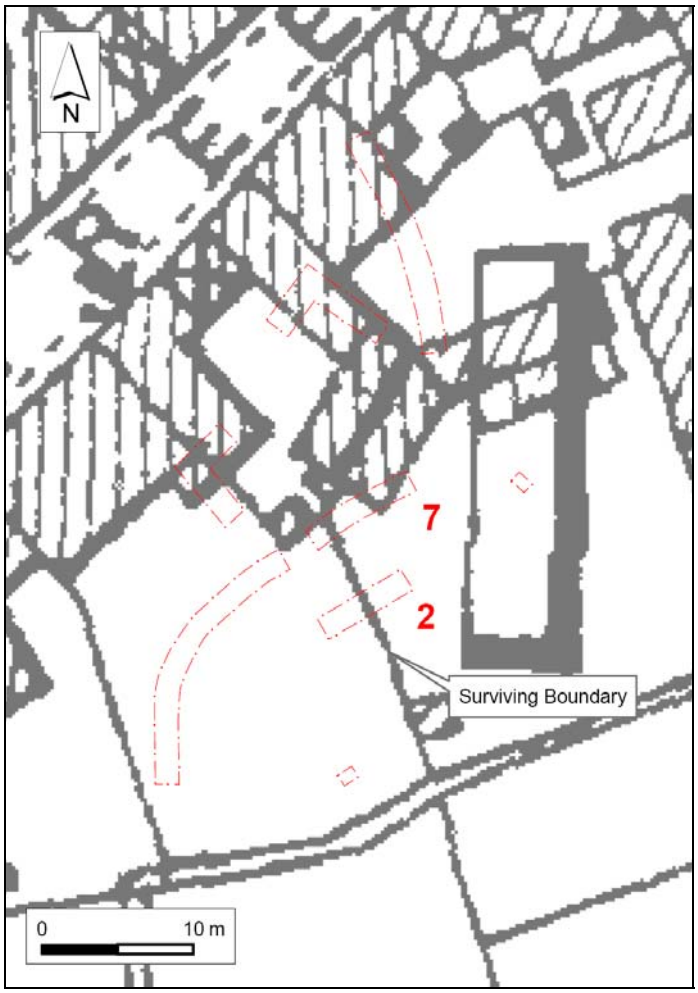
may yield useful information relating to phases of construction on Walker Street, the nature of industrial activity on Tan Bank and landuse zoning within the town. It also provides a good indicator that deeply stratified medieval remains may exist elsewhere in the town.

Across the southern half of the site the only observed property boundary was a sandstone wall running north-south behind numbers 11 and 13 Walker Street. The wall survived as a shallow footing, two courses deep within a wide cut, and is the same phase of construction as the southern boundary wall which still stands to a height of four courses.

Figure 40 below shows the trench locations and the observed boundary as depicted on the 1902 Ordnance Survey map. The date of the wall could not be determined as there were no cultural remains in the backfill, however maps from the 19th century suggest that the boundary was straightened between 1831 and 1882 (c.f. Figures 4 and 5). This may provide an approximate date range for its construction. A brick lined culvert to the west of the wall in Trench 2 respected the alignment of the wall and was clearly created before the areas of modern car parking.

From the trial trenching it was evident that the section of wall seen in Trenches 2 and 7 had been demolished to ground level in the recent past, as the soil directly overlying the foundation was quite disturbed and contained modern refuse.

**Figure 40: Trench Locations in relation to 1902 Ordnance Survey Map**



## 11.5 Limitations to survival of archaeological remains

The historic levels in the majority of the site had been removed during the 20th century.

Trenches 1, 2 and 6 showed that in the south-western corner of the site there had been extensive ground disturbance to a depth of 1.28m below the existing ground surface. It appears that this part of the site had been stripped of any overlying deposits when drainage was inserted, in the late 19th or early 20th centuries. These ceramic drains had been capped with clay, redeposited topsoil and hardcore. The construction cut for these drains sloped down gradually from the eastern edge of the area, leaving underlying deposits intact around the boundary wall found in Trench 2.

Trenches 2, 3 and 7 demonstrated that construction of the south-eastern area of the existing car park had involved removal of historic deposits to a depth of around 0.64m below the existing ground level. This void had been replaced by a deep deposit of hardcore and tarmac. In this area the edge to the car park was steep sided, defined along its western edge by a concrete-set kerb.

Trenches 4, 5 and 8 confirmed the suspicion that the footprint of the 20th century buildings on the south side of 9-13 Walker Street had been terraced into the rising ground, and had therefore removed any traces of earlier buildings. The only remains in this area included a discontinuous cobbled courtyard surface (relating to a 19th century entranceway that ran from Walker Street through No 11), and some earlier pits and a well which only survived where they had been cut into the underlying natural geology.

## 12.0 CONCLUSION

The programme of archaeological investigation was undertaken to assist in discharging part of the Conservation Area Consent. The aim of this programme of trial trenching was to locate the extent and condition of any archaeological remains on site that might be damaged by the proposed regeneration of the area. The works have succeeded in meeting the aims specified at the outset in the following ways:

- nine archaeological trial trenches were excavated
- all finds and structural/palaeoenvironmental samples were retained and assessed
- the results were analysed and interpreted
- a deposit model has been developed including a defined zone of enhanced archaeological significance.

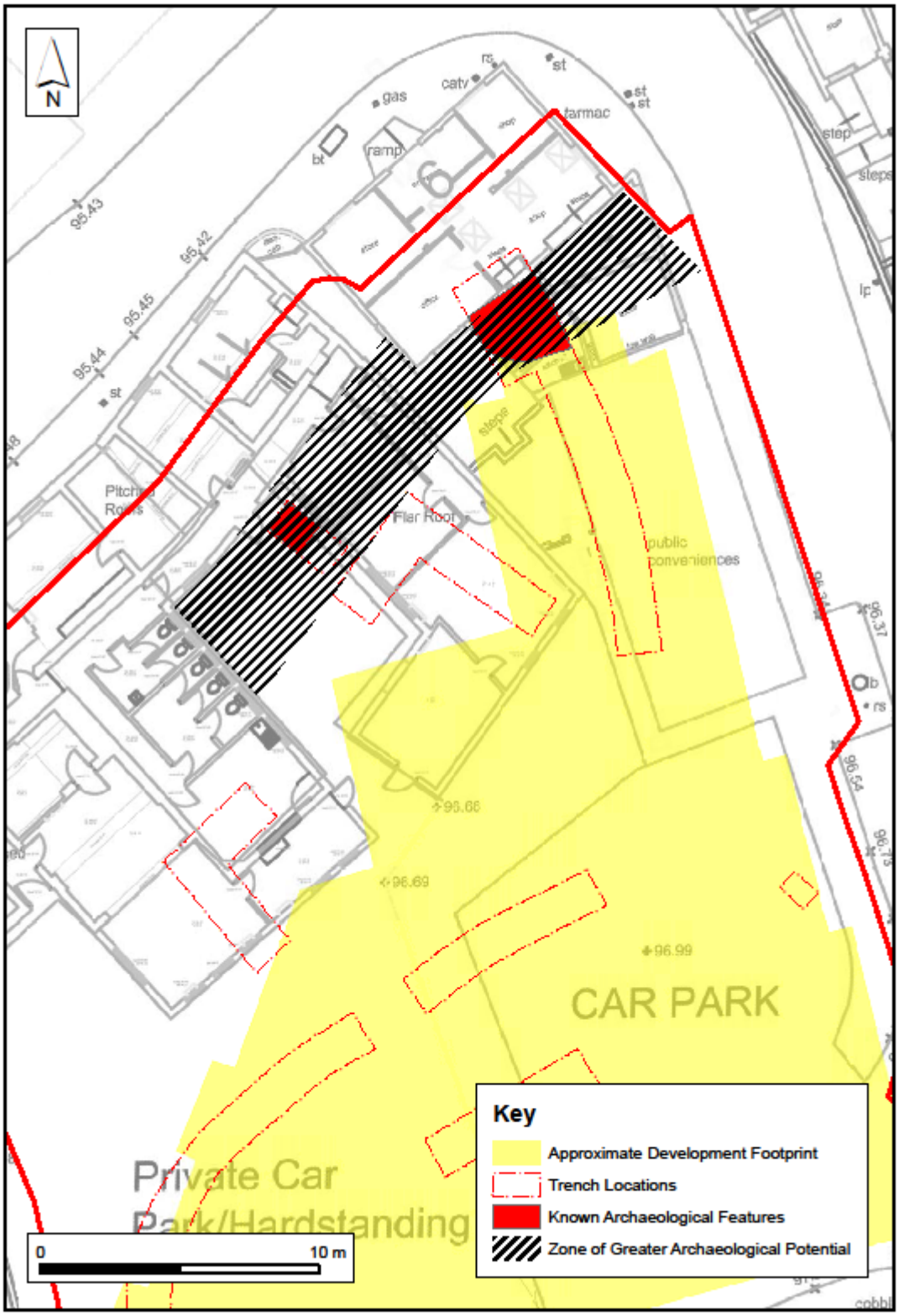
The trial trenching was suitably targeted to identify zones of archaeological activity and preservation on the site, and also provided a rare opportunity to investigate a site in the medieval core of Wellington.

The results have shown that although archaeological features do survive on the site, their survival has been limited to a zone which was not subject to major disturbance through groundworks in the 19th and 20th centuries (Figure 41). The key area of survival has been identified as a strip of land 4m wide and 20m in length immediately to the rear of No 11 Walker Street. Even in this zone the original medieval ground surfaces have been removed to the level of natural sands due to later construction, but deep waterlogged features with good organic preservation were found to survive below the top of the natural sand. These archaeological features (ditches, wells and pits) can be considered to represent a very significant archaeological resource for understanding the history and development of Wellington.

The footprint of the proposed building lies outside the core area of archaeological survival, and as such no further archaeological work will be necessary within the footprint of the proposed new library and civic centre. However when construction of a pedestrian route through the area as part of Phase 1, or plans for refurbishment and reuse of the Edgbaston House complex are implemented as part of Phases 2 and 3 of the regeneration programme, then it will be necessary to undertake archaeological excavation and recording of the well and other features within the zone of surviving archaeological potential (Figure 41).

It should also be noted that the significant archaeological results identified by this study were achieved because a sufficiently large sample size of the development area was trenched (approximately 10% of the area) A two part investigation was undertaken, with the second part making use of the largely negative phase one results to target areas which could still contain potential for survival of archaeological remains. This iterative process, followed in compliance with best practice guidance as set out in English Heritage's MAP2 document, produced a highly effective fulfilment of the condition placed on Conservation Area Consent.

**Figure 41 Development footprint and zone of archaeological potential**



## 13.0 ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS AND BIBLIOGRAPHY

### 13.1 Acknowledgements

The SLR staff involved in the preparation of this report are:

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Laurence Hayes | Associate | Report Text |
| Tim Malim | Principal Archaeologist | Project Management, Quality Assurance |

SLR acknowledge the assistance of Paul North and Alan Johnson of Telford and Wrekin Council in the execution of the site works. The fieldwork was undertaken by Laurence Hayes (SLR).

Assessments of the finds and samples were carried out by Ben Jervis (University of Southampton), Emma Kitchen and Ben Gearey (Birmingham Archaeo-Environmental) and Ian Tyers.

SLR is a Registered Organisation (RO) with the Institute for Archaeologists (IfA). SLR undertakes work to the highest professional standards. This report has been produced with reference to the IfA's *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Evaluation* (revised 2008).

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## 14.0 CLOSURE

This report has been prepared by SLR Consulting Limited with all reasonable skill, care and diligence, and taking account of the manpower and resources devoted to it by agreement with the client. Information reported herein is based on the interpretation of data collected and has been accepted in good faith as being accurate and valid.

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# Edgbaston House
# Palaeoenvironmental Assessment

BIRMINGHAM ARCHAEO-ENVIRONMENTAL

BAE

# Edgbaston House- Palaeoenvironmental Assessment

**Emma Kitchen and Dr B.R.Gearey MIFA**

**SLR Consulting Ltd -2010**

# Edgbaston House-
# Palaeoenvironmental Assessment

by

Emma Kitchen and Dr B.R.Gearey MIFA

March 2010

Contact address for authors:

Birmingham Archaeo-Environmental
Institute of Archaeology and Antiquity
University of Birmingham
Edgbaston
Birmingham
B15 2TT

Prepared for:

SLR Consulting Ltd

# 1. INTRODUCTION

Birmingham Archaeo-Environmental was contracted by SLR Consulting Ltd. to carry out a palaeoentomological assessment of two bulk samples of material from an archaeological site at Edgbaston House, Wellington. The samples were collected from a sandy organic silt deposit from the ditch of a possible medieval burgage plot. This report discusses potential of these samples and makes recommendations for future investigation. This assessment was carried out in order to establish the following:

1. Are insect remains present? If so, are they of interpretative value?
2. Do the insect faunas recovered indicate the nature of the depositional environment and the wider landscape?
3. Is there potential for further palaeoenvironmental analyses of these deposits?

# 2. METHODS

Two 10 litre samples were processed using the standard method of paraffin flotation as outlined by Kenward *et al* (1980). The samples were sorted using a low-power binocular microscope. Identifications were made to species level where possible, using the Gorham and Girling insect collection located in Birmingham University. The insects recovered from both samples were very well preserved. Both produced a reasonably sized fauna (Table 1). The distribution of individuals among the species was relatively even.

# 3. RESULTS

Sample 1-context 802

The sample produced a considerable number of synanthropic species (individuals dependent upon or closely associated with anthropogenic environments). *Xylodromus concinnus* is exclusively synanthropic being found in hay refuse. *Latridius minutus* is highly synanthropic and is found in association with stables and sheds. It would thus appear that hay had been dumped in the deposit along with animal dung, as indicated by the species *Oxytelus rugosus*, *Cryptophagus, Apion* sp, *Atomaria* sp and *Ptinus fur.* The deposit also contained decaying wood and rotting vegetable waste, as suggested by *Aleochara geutsppwdet* and *Anobium puncatum*. *Lesteva longoelytrata* and *Leistus* sp also suggest the deposit may have been in close proximity to cultivated soil. Perhaps unsurprisingly, the presence of wet, muddy conditions is suggested by *Philonthus* sp. The deposit produced a considerable number of *Thoracochaeta zosterea* diptera (fly) larvae cases. This small fly, whose larvae develop in wet cesspit fills, is often found in archaeological deposits ranging from Saxon to the 18$^{th}$ Century (Belshau 1989).

Sample 2- Context 806

This sample also produced a considerable number of synanthropes including the species recorded in the previous sample *Xylodromus concinnus,* and *Latridius minutus* which are indicative of hay refuse. A number of species such as *Cercyon*

*unipuntatus*, *Omalium* sp, *Cryptophagus* sp. are associated with compost heaps and decaying matter, including carrion. Only one species *Cercyon atricapillus* is solely associated with animal dung. Wet and muddy substrates are indicated by the presence of *Stenus* sp., *Philonthus* sp. and *Pterostichus* sp. Decaying wood and leaf litter was also a component of the deposit as indicated by *Tachinus* sp, *Anobium puncatum* and *Anaspis* species. The deposit produced seven *Thoracochaeta zosterea* diptera (fly) larvae cases, which still contained the developing fly. This suggests that lime was placed in the deposit which counteracted the natural growth cycle of the fly. This may also explain the presence of *Melagethes* sp., which is found in calcareous pastures.

## 4. DISCUSSION

Both samples produced similar faunas that are typical of urban archaeological cesspit deposits. Although there are some differences in the overall species list, the ecological setting which they inhabit is fundamentally the same. Overall it can be concluded that the deposits included dumped waste material which had created a 'liquid cess-pit' environment in the ditch. Other material probably dumped into the feature included rotting hay waste, animal dung, decaying wood, carrion and decomposing vegetable waste. The conditions within the ditch were very probably putrid and due to the presence of *Thoracochaeta zosterae* are likely to have contained human faeces. Both samples provide an indication that cultivated soil was in close proximity to the site. Interestingly it appears that some form of cesspit 'control' was used in sample 2, but not in sample 1. It is likely that this control was lime, which is commonly used in cesspits to minimize both the smell and development of fly larvae. The samples provide only limited evidence regarding the wider environment, although cultivated land may have been close by.

## 5. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Both samples produced well preserved and reasonably sized faunal assemblages suggesting high potential for further palaeoenvironmental investigation of deposits from this site. The fauna contain clear indicators of fetid cesspit-like conditions with waste from animal stabling, rotting hay and dung, vegetable waste, carrion, human faeces and rotting wood are all suggested by the insect fauna. Sample 2 (context 2) produced evidence for the deposition of lime, most probably indicating some anthropogenic control of fly development and foul smells within the cesspit. Further sampling at the site would enable a more in-depth assessment of the nature of sediment accumulation and anthropogenic activity at the site.

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| **Species list** | **Sample 1**<br>**Context 802** | **Sample 2**<br>**Context 806** |
|---|---|---|
| | Number of individuals | Number of individuals |
| *Leistus* sp | 2 | |
| *Pterostichus* sp | 2 | 2 |
| *Drominus quadrinatatus* | | 2 |
| *Helphorus* sp | 1 | 1 |
| *Cercyon unipuntatus* | | 2 |
| *Cercyon atricapillus* | | 2 |
| *Cercyon* sp | | 2 |
| *Omalium* sp | | 1 |
| *Xylodromus conninus* | 3 | |
| *Lesteva longoelytrata* | | 2 |
| *Oxytelus rugosus* | 3 | 2 |
| *Stenus* sp | | 1 |
| *Philonthus* sp | 2 | 2 |
| *Tachinus* sp | | 1 |
| *Aleochara geutsppwdet* | | 3 |
| *Cryptophagus* sp | 3 | 2 |
| *Atomaria* | 1 | |
| *Meligethes* sp | | 3 |
| *Latridius minutus* | 3 | 1 |
| *Anobium puncatum* | 3 | 2 |
| *Ptinus fur* | 2 | |
| *Anaspis* sp | | 1 |
| *Trechius* sp | | 1 |
| *Apion* sp | | |
| | | |
| | | |
| | | |
| *Thoracochaeta zosterae* | 14 | 7 |

**Table 1**: The list of insect species located in samples 1 and 2.
Insects are in taphonomic order.

**AYLESBURY**
7 Wornal Park, Menmarsh Road, Worminghall, Aylesbury, Buckinghamshire HP18 9PH
**T: 01844 337380 / F: 01844 337381**

**BELFAST**
24 Ballynahinch Street, Hillsborough, Co. Down, BT26 6AW, Northern Ireland
**T: TBC / F: TBC**

**BRADFORD-ON-AVON**
Treenwood House, Rowden Lane, Bradford-on-Avon, Wiltshire BA15 2AU
**T: 01225 309400 / F: 01225 309401**

**BRISTOL**
109 Pembroke Road, Clifton, Bristol, Avon BS8 3EU
**T: 0117 906 4280 / F: 0117 317 9535**

**CAMBRIDGE**
8 Stow Court, Stow-cum-Quy, Cambridge, Cambridgeshire CB25 9AS
**T: 01223 813805 / F: 01223 813783**

**CARDIFF**
Fulmar House, Beignon Close, Ocean Way, Cardiff CF24 5HF
**T: 029 20491010 / F: 029 20487903**

**CHELMSFORD**
Unit 77, The Waterhouse Business Centre, 2 Cromer Way, Chelmsford, Essex CM1 2QE
**T: 01245 392170 / F: 01245 392171**

**DUBLIN**
7 Dundrum Business Park, Windy Arbour, Dublin 14, Ireland
**T: + 353 (0)1 2964667 / F: + 353 (0)1 2964676**

**EDINBURGH**
No. 4 The Roundal, Roddinglaw Business Park, Gogar, Edinburgh EH12 9DB
**T: 0131 3356830 / F: 0131 3356831**

**EXETER**
The Innovation Centre, Rennes Drive, University of Exeter Campus, Exeter EX4 4RN
**T: 01392 247913 / F: 01392 425246**

**FARNBOROUGH**
The Pavilion, 2 Sherbourne Road, South Farnborough, Hampshire GU14 6JT
**T: 01252 515682 / F: 01252 512274**

**GLASGOW**
4 Woodside Place, Charing Cross, Glasgow G3 7QF
**T: 0141 3535037 / F: 0141 3535038**

**HUDDERSFIELD**
Westleigh House, Wakefield Road, Denby Dale, Huddersfield, West Yorkshire HD8 8QJ
**T: 01484 860521 / F: 01484 868286**

**LEEDS**
Suite 1, Jason House, Kerry Hill, Horsforth, Leeds, West Yorkshire LS18 4JR
**T: 0113 2580650 / F: 0113 2818832**

**MAIDSTONE**
19 Hollingworth Court, Turkey Mill, Maidstone, Kent ME14 5PP
**T: 01622 609242 / F: 01622 695872**

**NEWCASTLE-UPON-TYNE**
Sailors Bethel, Horatio Street, Newcastle-upon-Tyne, Tyne and Wear NE1 2PE
**T: 0191 2611966 / F: 0191 2302346**

**NOTTINGHAM**
Aspect House, Aspect Business Park, Bennerley Road, Nottingham NG6 8WR
**T: 0115 9647280 / F: 0115 9751576**

**REDDITCH**
Brockhill Court, Brockhill Lane, Redditch, Worcestershire B97 6RB
**T: 01527 597000 / F: 01527 584408**

**SHREWSBURY**
Mytton Mill, Forton Heath, Montford Bridge, Shrewsbury, Shropshire SY4 1HA
**T: 01743 850170 / F: 01743 850868**

**STAFFORD**
8 Parker Court, Staffordshire Technology Park, Beaconside, Stafford, Staffordshire ST18 0WP
**T: 01785 253331 / F: 01785 246660**

**WARRINGTON**
Suite 9 Beech House, Padgate Business Park, Green Lane, Warrington, Cheshire WA1 4JN
**T: 01925 827218 / F: 01925 827977**

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