

An Archaeological Evaluation at the Former "Prestige" Factory Site, City Road, Derby (Phase 1).

In February 1993 Birmingham University Field Archaeology Unit was commissioned by G.F.Tomlinson Building Ltd to carry out an archaeological evaluation at the former "Prestige" factory site, City Road, Derby (NGR SK 353371). The evaluation was designed to assess the archaeological implications of a proposed housing development. The northern boundary of the site is 300m south of the Roman fort at Little Chester (SAM 147) and a 4th century building (SAM 105) stood 160m north of the site. The Roman road Ryknield Street also passed close to the site. These factors indicated the possibility of Romano-British settlement within the development area, with the further possibility of the presence of waterfront activity along the nearby River Derwent. This stage of the evaluation was concerned with the southern half of the factory site only.

Method

Six 2 x 2m trenches were excavated, positioned to give a profile of deposits across the site (fig.1). Trenches 1 and 3 were sited to include 1x1m test pits already dug by the contractors, in order to minimise disturbance. The concrete factory floor and modern overburden were removed by machine and surfaces cleaned manually. The maximum depth of excavation was limited to the proposed depth of foundations (1.00m) with a safety margin of a further 0.2 - 0.3m.

The Evaluation

Trench 1

In this trench 0.9-1.0m of modern rubble (1000) was removed to the north and 1.2m to the south. A cast iron pipe ran north-south along the eastern side of the trench. Beneath 1000 was a compact greyish-brown silt (1001)

containing brick fragments and flecks of charcoal. Sitting on top of 1001, with no foundation cut being visible, was the base of a poorly constructed post-medieval wall (F1) orientated east-west and made of rough sandstone blocks (1002). The trench was excavated to a depth of 1.2m (45.99m A.O.D).

Trench 2

Here 1.3m of soft dark brown loam (2000) containing modern and late-18th century pottery lay over a compact greyish-brown silt (2001) containing brick fragments and flecks of charcoal. This silt sloped away to the north. Maximum depth of this trench was 1.3m (45.94m A.O.D).

Trench 3

A dark brown loam containing some grains of mortar (3000) was removed here to a depth of 0.7m to the west and 1.3m to the east. Beneath this was a compact greyish-brown silt (3001). To the south this was cut by a modern pipe trench orientated east-west. Depth of excavation here was 1.3m (45.94m A.O.D).

Trench 4

In this trench 0.8m of modern rubble (4000) was removed and a compact greyish-brown silt (4001) containing flecks of charcoal was contacted. The trench was excavated to a depth of 1.3m (45.92m A.O.D). Augering here contacted a yellowish-brown sand at a depth of 45.32m A.O.D.

Trench 5

Here 1.0m of modern rubble (5000) was removed to the west and 0.75m to the east. Under this was a compact greyish-brown silt (5001) containing flecks of charcoal. Again, the trench was excavated to a depth of 1.3m (45.91m A.O.D).

Trench 6

In the northern half of this trench was a brick-built cellar filled with rubble (6000). To the south a compact greyish-brown silt (6001) was contacted at a depth of 0.9m to the west and 1.1m to the south. Again, maximum depth of excavations was 1.3m (45.99m A.O.D). Augering here contacted a hard surface, possibly bedrock, at 45.29m A.O.D.

Discussion and Implications

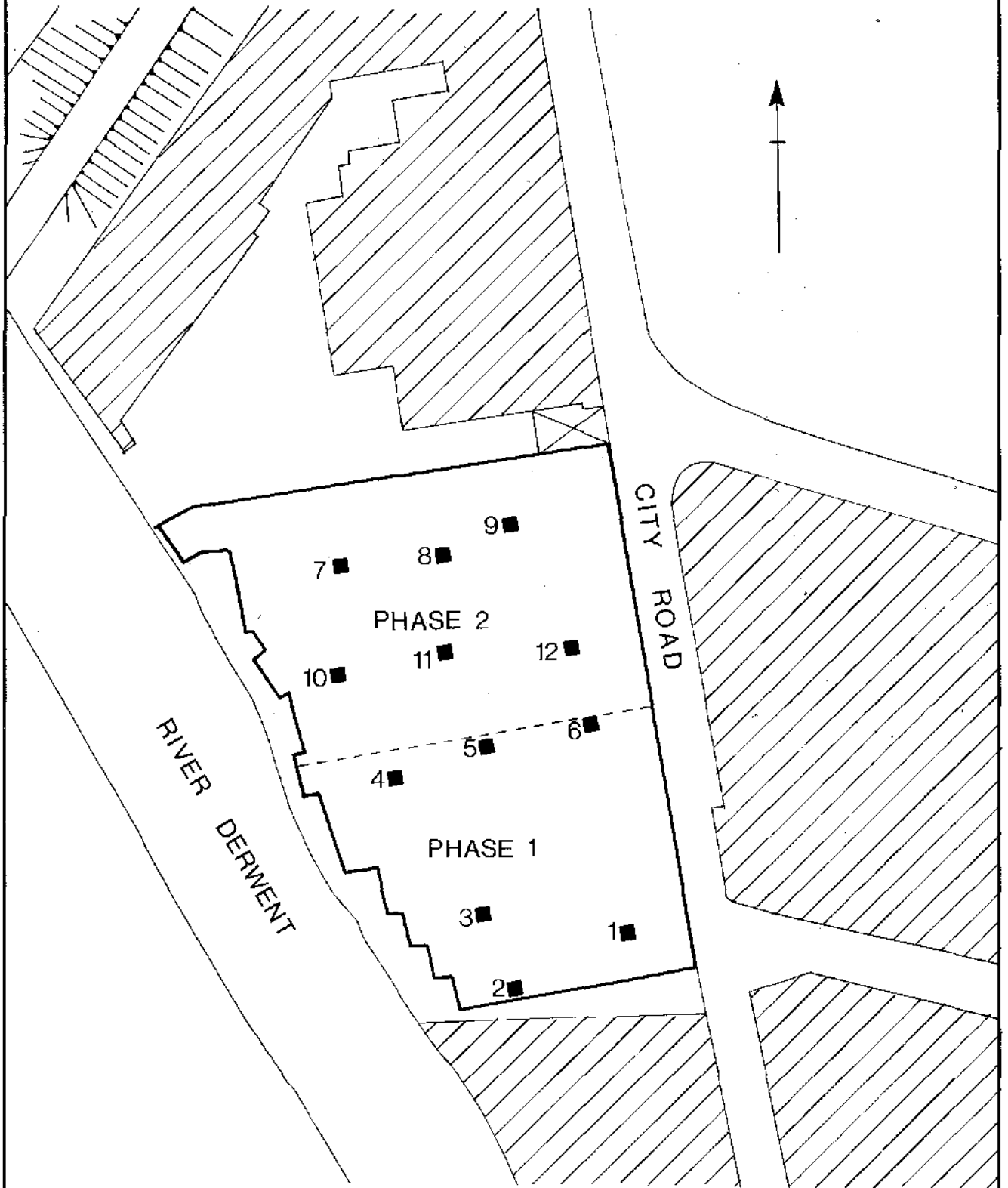
No archaeological features were contacted in Trenches 2-5 nor were any significant finds recovered. The wall contacted in Trench 1 is of post-medieval date and the cellar in Trench 6 is probably of 19th century date. A deposit of alluvial silt seems to extend across the whole site at least 1.2m deep to the east, nearest the River Derwent. A profile of this deposit can be reconstructed from data in the site archive. The land has obviously been built up with loam, possibly derived from levelled flood defences and demolition material. It is possible that any archaeological features could be deeply sealed by silt. Alternatively, evidence suggests that there was no Romano-British occupation on the site or that later earth-moving has removed any archaeological deposits. There would therefore appear to be no archaeological implications for the presently proposed scheme with its rafted foundations (down 1.0m), re-use of factory piles and sinking of narrow-bore piles at wide intervals.

Acknowledgements

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L.R.Jones 18/2/93

LOCATION OF TRENCHES



0 50m

1 ■ ARCHAEOLOGICAL TRENCHES