

Birmingham University Field Archaeology Unit

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**Archaeological work at
Wolverhampton Cross Shaft,
September 1993**

by

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Introduction

This report provides a brief summary of a small piece of archaeological work carried out at the base of a Saxon Cross shaft located on the south side of St. Peter's church in the centre of Wolverhampton (NGR SO 9142 9976) (Fig.1). The work was carried out by Birmingham University Field Archaeology Unit on behalf of Wolverhampton Metropolitan Borough Council. It formed part of a programme of research and conservation on the monument and followed on from an archaeological assessment carried out in September 1992 (Hughes and Buteux 1992).

Aim

To determine the relationship between the stone column of the cross shaft and a large circular sandstone base. This relationship was concealed by a ring of concreted rubble which appeared to be of nineteenth century date.

Method

Two wedge-shaped segments of the concreted rubble, on the eastern and western sides of the monument were removed manually with a hammer and chisel (Fig. 2). The segment on the eastern side was adjacent to the 1992 excavation. Scale drawings were made of the resulting sections through the rubble and the exposed segment of the stone base was photographed.

Results (Fig. 3)

The rubble was composed of reused sandstone blocks many of them worked with faceted or carved surfaces. These were bound with a compact pink mortar. The inner mortar was noticeably darker in colour suggesting that the consolidation had been carried out in two stages. An outer 'skin' of grouting comprised a hard grey concrete.

The exposed junction between the column and the stone base indicated that the centre of the base had been hollowed out to form a bowl-like depression into which the column had been set. Three small stones (two of which were rounded pebbles) were recorded in the gap between the base of the column and the hollowed out stone base. These were bonded with a friable light pink mortar.

The mortars were examined by G.C. Morgan (School of Archaeological Studies, University of Leicester). The particle size distribution was similar to that identified for samples from the foundation of the cross shaft (Morgan 1992). However, they had a higher acid soluble or 'lime' content and were high in silica. The presence of fragments of fired clay may represent lime kiln residues suggesting a later medieval date.

Conclusion

The exposed segments suggested that the column was slotted into the hollowed out centre of the stone base and that the two features were carved from two distinct stones. The small stones were presumably used as packing material. It was not possible to determine whether the column was inserted completely or only partially through the base.

References

Hughes, G. and Buteux, S. 1992 *Wolverhampton Cross Shaft, an archaeological assessment, August 1992*, BUFAU Report No. 220.

Morgan G.C. 1992 'The mortars' in Hughes, G. and Buteux, S. *Wolverhampton Cross Shaft, an archaeological assessment, August 1992*, BUFAU Report No. 220, 5.

WOLVERHAMPTON CROSS SHAFT 1992

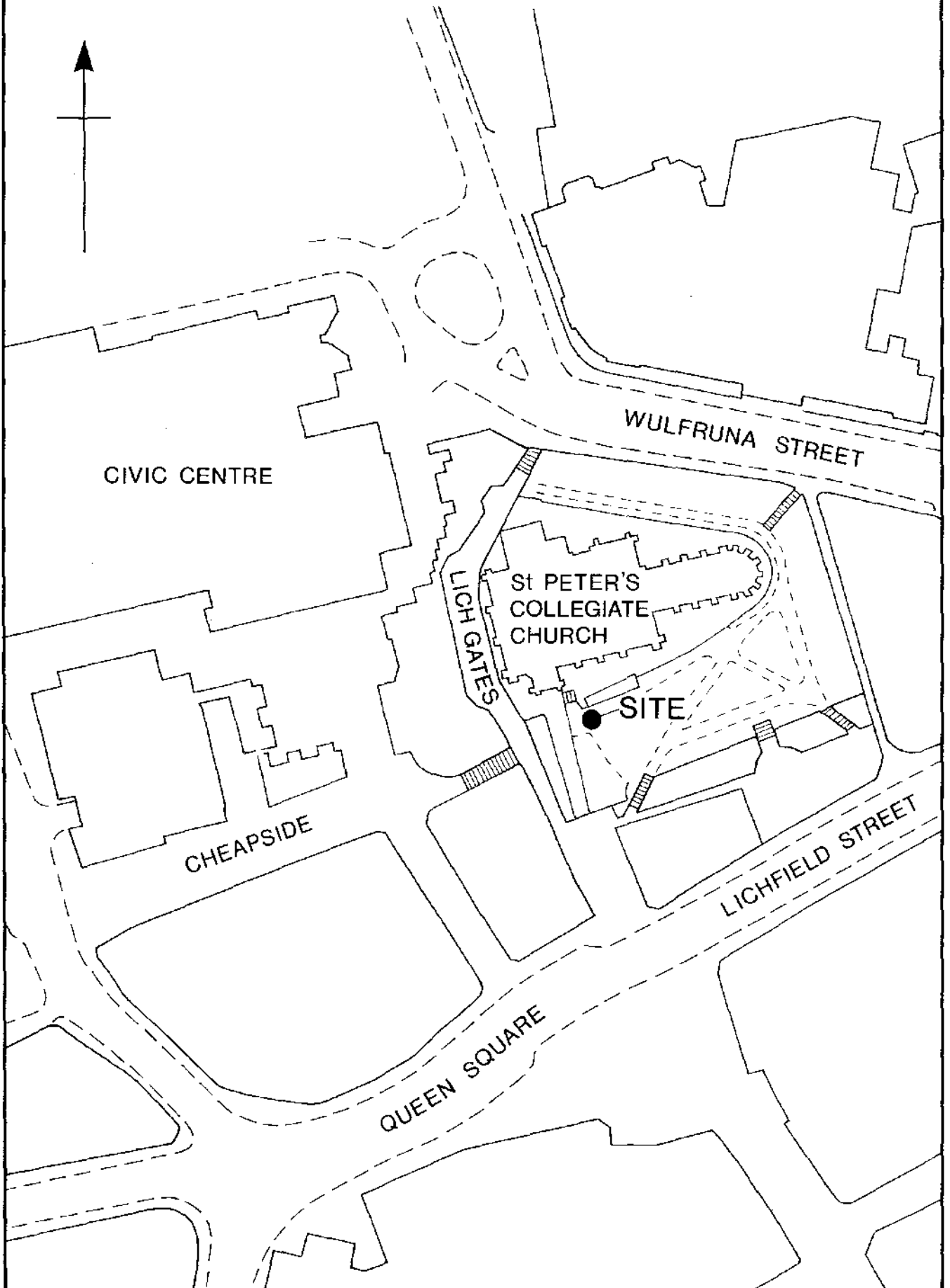
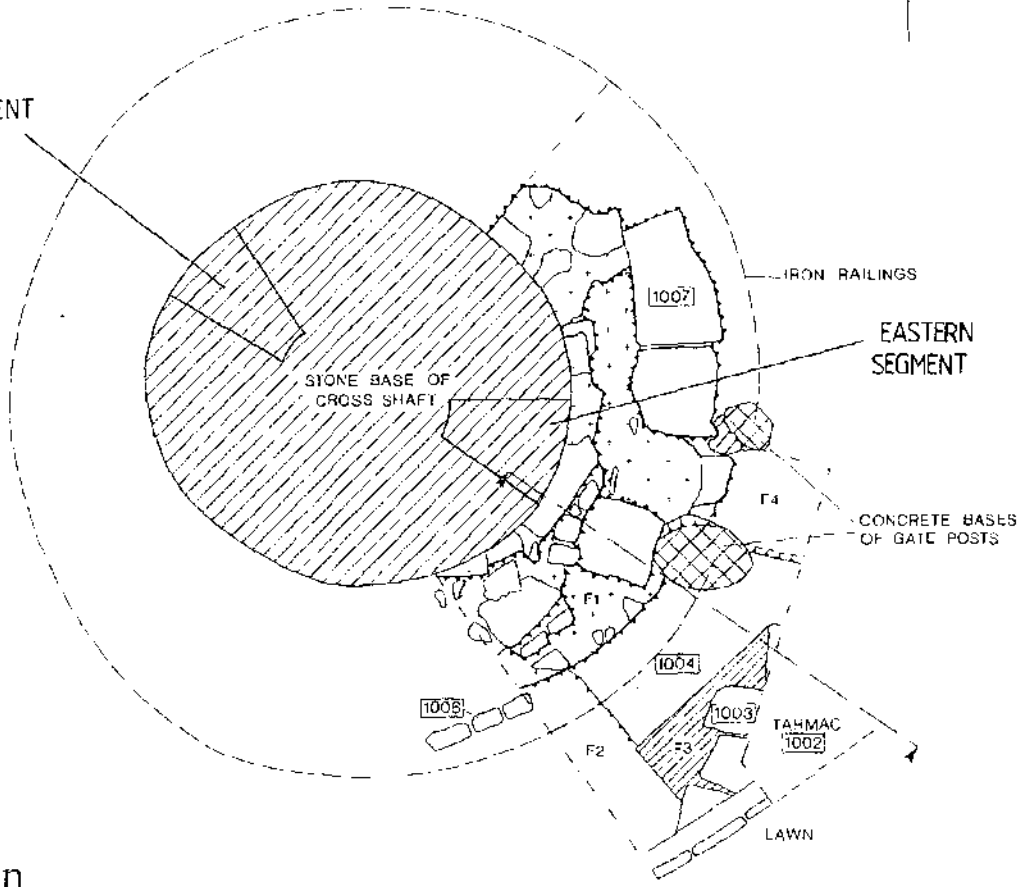


Figure 1

WOLVERHAMPTON CROSS SHAFT 1992

A Plan

WESTERN SEGMENT



B Section

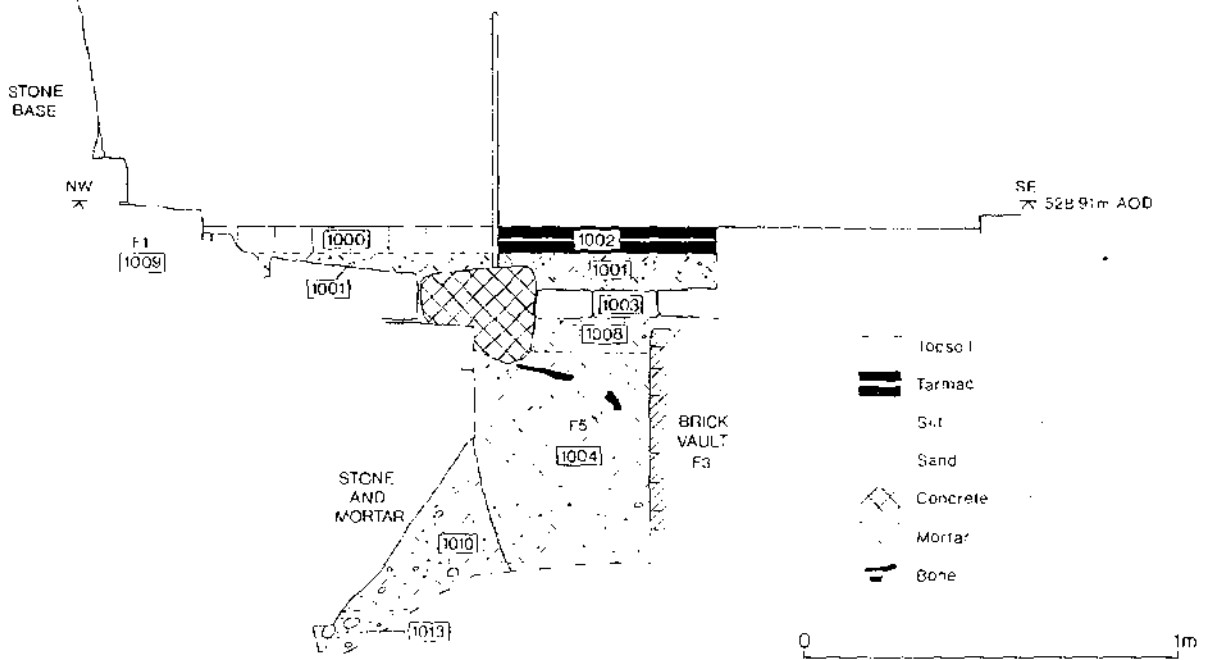
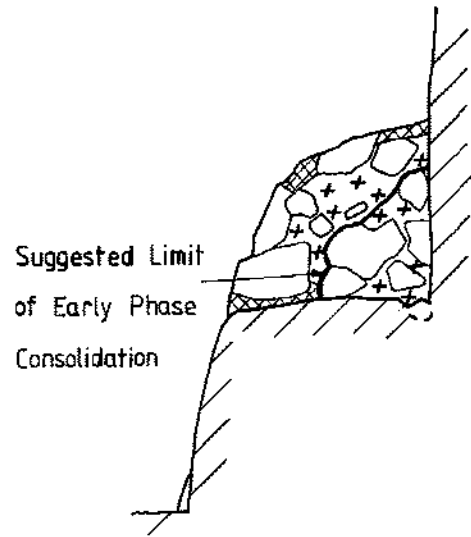


Figure 2

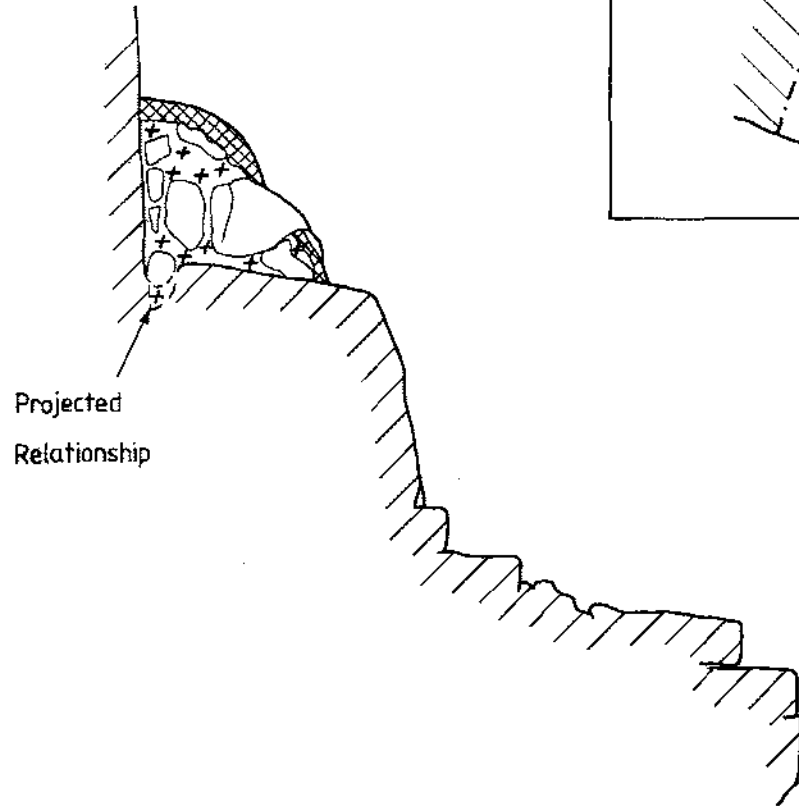
WOLVERHAMPTON CROSS SHAFT SEPT. 1993

Section Through Eastern Segment of Rubble Base 1:20

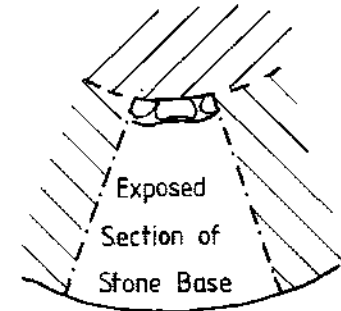
NORTH EAST FACING SECTION



SOUTH FACING SECTION



SKETCH PLAN OF REMOVED EASTERN SEGMENT 1:20






-  CEMENT
-  MORTAR
-  PILLAR & STONE BASE

Figure 3