Birmingham Archaeology
Project No. 479
1997

An Archaeological Watching Brief Martineau Galleries Development, Birmingham City Centre

Interim Statement

by
Catherine Mould

For further information please contact:
Alex Jones (Director)
Birmingham Archaeology
The University of Birmingham
Edgbaston
Birmingham B15 2TT
Tel: 0121 414 5513
Fax: 0121 414 5516
E-Mail: BUFAU@bham.ac.uk
Web Address: http://www.arch-ant.bham.ac.uk/bufau

An Archaeological Watching Brief Martineau Galleries Development, Birmingham City Centre

An Archaeological Watching Brief

of the Proposed Martineau Galleries Development,

Birmingham City Centre

Interim Statement

1.0 Summary

No sealed archaeological deposits were recorded during the recent monitoring of geotechnical work and service trial-pits. However, a deep layer of material recorded in Corporation Street, which is thought to have been imported to raise the ground level prior to the insertion of the street itself, may seal earlier archaeological deposits. In addition, the recording of the sandstone subsoil horizon at a depth of 1m below the present ground surface in Dale End suggests that any surviving archaeological deposits are likely to lie close to the surface. The depth and nature of the deposits recorded during the watching brief bore out the results of an earlier desk-based assessment (Mould 1997) which had identified eight zones of potential archaeological survival. Any archaeological deposits within Zones 1-5 have the potential to add to the existing knowledge of the historical development of this area of the city centre and further archaeological monitoring is recommended to record any surviving deposits and features.

2.0 Introduction

Proposed development of the area defined by Corporation Street, Priory Queensway, Dale End and Union Street may result in disturbance of buried archaeological remains. A desk-based assessment of the above and below ground archaeological implications of the proposed development was carried out in accordance with Planning Policy Guidance Note 16 (Department of Environment 1990) and policy 8.36 of the City Council Unitary Development Plan, and this was followed by an archaeological watching brief of geotechnical and service investigations. The watching brief was carried out in March and April 1998 by Birmingham University Field Archaeology Unit (BUFAU). This interim statement was produced by BUFAU on behalf of Leslie Jones Architects. and should be read in conjunction with the earlier desk-based assessment (Mould 1997).

3.0 Location of the Proposed Development Area (Figure 1)

The proposed development area is located within the centre of Birmingham, to the north of New Street station and to the east of St. Philip's Cathedral (centred on NGR SP 0726 8701). The archaeological study area, defined by the earlier desk-based assessment (Mould 1997), encompasses an area bounded by Corporation Street, Priory Queensway, Dale End and Union Street.

4.0 Geology and Topography

The proposed development area is located to the west of the conjectured Birmingham Fault, on a narrow Keuper Sandstone ridge, which extends from the Lickey Hills in the southwest to Sutton Coldfield in the northeast (OS Solid Geology sheet 168). The drift geology comprises sand, with bands of clayey sand and gravel (OS Drift Geology sheet 168, Watts 1980). The area is situated on an elevated piece of land which slopes rapidly down towards the Rea valley to the south and the historic markets area, centred on the Bull Ring, to the southwest.

5.0 Zones of Archaeological Potential (Figure 2)

Eight zones of potential archaeological survival were identified by the earlier desk-based assessment. A description of these is included below.

Zone 1 comprises the lower end of Priory Queensway, which originally lay within the grounds of the Priory of St. Thomas, and subsequently represented the eastern access to the Georgian Square. The raising of the modern Priory Queensway to compensate for the downward slope from Upper Priory to Lower Priory suggests that archaeological deposits associated with the historic street level may survive in this zone.

Zone 2 extends along the length of Dale End, one of the earliest roads in medieval Birmingham, and one which is thought to mark the eastern limit of the medieval town. A comparison of the ground level information from 1890 with later Ordnance Survey maps suggests that no significant changes have occurred in the street level. In addition, photographic evidence and the raising of Priory Queensway suggests that a significant dip, at the point where Dale End feeds under that road, may represent its original street level.

Zone 3 comprises the line of Bull Street from Corporation Street to Dale End. This represents one of the earliest medieval roads in Birmingham. A comparison of the available ground level information shows that the ground has been raised at the Corporation Street end, possibly to compensate for the insertion of a subway. Towards Dale End the ground has been lowered, but only by 0.31m. The widening of Bull Street, by 14 feet, in the early-20th century suggests that the foundations of earlier structures may survive below the present-day street level.

Zone 4 is represented by Union Street. Established in the early-19th century this street is, in historic terms, a relatively recent addition to the urban-fabric. However, photographic evidence suggests that a number of Regency-style houses of some pretension were located along its frontage. Evidence of these may survive beneath the now pedestrianised surface.

Zone 5 extends along the length of Corporation Street from Union Street up to Priory Queensway. Although quite heavily disturbed by service trenches and a number of subways, a comparison of the ground levels and information within BSM File 158 suggests that the street itself has been raised at the junction with Bull Street, and has remained constant at the junction with Priory Queensway. It is possible that any services were also inserted at a higher level, so leaving intact any archaeological deposits below.

Zone 6 is centred on Old Square and includes two subways on its eastern side. Originally located within the medieval Priory grounds, this zone was later subject to intense development in and around the 18th century Georgian Square. Subsequent development along the later-19th century Corporation Street and the 1960s Priory Queensway makes the likelihood of archaeological deposits surviving within this zone difficult to assess. Although the two subways cut down to Old Square, the raising of road levels for Priory Queensway may suggest potential for survival of isolated deposits within this zone.

Zone 7 is located within the limits of the medieval town and is identified with the 1960s block of commercial premises defined by Priory Queensway, Dale End, Bull Street and Corporation Street. It is uncertain whether the location of an earlier Chemical Works will have resulted in any ground contamination, however, given the extensive basements, underground parking, service road and loading bays here, it is unlikely that archaeological deposits will have survived within this zone.

Zone 8 is also located within the medieval town. It comprises a second area of 1960s commercial premises, which is defined by Bull Street, Littlewoods, Union Street and Corporation Street. Again, extensive basements, some of which extend 8m below the present street levels, and the railway tunnel, suggest that it is unlikely that archaeological deposits will have survived within this zone.

6.0 Archaeological Watching Brief (Figure 3; Robert & Palmer drawings TP003, and TP\001)

A total of 6 boreholes (Figure 3: BH1/1A, 2-4 and 7) and 15 trial-pits (Robert & Palmer TP\001 Numbers 1-9, 11-16) was excavated within the archaeological study area. Cores from boreholes 2-4 were examined on-site.

Borehole 1/1A (Basement at junction of Union Street and Corporation Street)
The sandstone subsoil was recorded at a depth of 5m below the present ground surface. It was sealed by structural debris and concrete.

Borehole 2 (Corporation Street)
The sandstone subsoil was recorded at a depth of 2m below the present ground surface. It was overlaid by approximately 0.60m of clean gravel-sand. This was sealed by a brown-black silt-sand deposit with charcoal and plaster lumps which was recorded at a depth of 0.20-1.35m below the present ground level.

Borehole 3 (Corporation Street)
Partially compacted sandstone subsoil was recorded at a depth of 4.30m below the present ground surface. It was overlaid by loose gravel and sand, similar to the backfill of service trenches recorded in the trial-pits. A black-brown silt-sand deposit containing charcoal lumps was recorded at 0.80m-1m below the present ground surface. It was sealed by a modern layer of gravel-sand.

Borehole 4 (Priory Queensway)
Sandy subsoil was recorded at 9.60m below the present ground surface. It was overlaid by over 7m of structural debris and clayey silt-sand. Loose cobbles were recorded at 5m, and were sealed by modern levelling deposits.

Borehole 7 (Dale End)
A silty-sand subsoil was recorded at 3.20 below the present ground surface. It was overlaid by a black sand-clay. This was overlaid by modern levelling deposits.

Trial-Pits
The purpose of the trial-pits was to locate and identify existing services within the proposed development area and, inevitably, the majority of deposits recorded were the fills of service trenches. The location and character of these services is given on Robert & Palmer TP003 and shall not be repeated here. The trial-pits were excavated to a depth of 1-2m, and it is possible that archaeological deposits and features may have survived beneath this level.

The trial-pits in Dale End (TP11 and 12) were of particular interest, in that the sandstone subsoil was recorded at a depth of 1m below the present ground level. This suggests that the street level has not altered significantly and that any surviving archaeological deposits would be affected by below-ground works

7.0 Recommendations for Archaeological Mitigation

As stated above, archaeological monitoring of the geotechnical works and service trial-pits has confirmed the results of the earlier desk-based assessment and has reinforced the identification of each of the eight zones of potential archaeological survival. The recommendations made here would need to be approved by Birmingham City Council.

As described in the desk-based assessment, the quality of 19th century documentary, cartographic and photographic evidence for the proposed development area is extremely high. The importance of this resource is enhanced by the loss of the above-ground evidence of the earlier character of this part of Birmingham. Although the archaeological watching brief suggests a potential for the limited survival of below-ground deposits, it is recommended that a more extensive examination of the documentary, cartographic and photographic evidence should form one part of the further archaeological mitigation for the proposed development.

It is also recommended that archaeological monitoring be continued throughout all of the groundworks associated with the proposed development at Martineau Galleries as any information relating the presence or absence of archaeological deposits will contribute to an understanding of the archaeological and historical development of Birmingham city centre.

Recommended levels of archaeological mitigation are as follows:

Zones 1-4
As detailed above, archaeological deposits within these zones have the potential to shed light on the historical development of this area from the medieval period onwards. It is, therefore, recommended that any below-ground work carried out before and during the development be

monitored by a qualified archaeologist. Should significant archaeological remains be recorded during this monitoring, provision should be made for a more intensive archaeological presence, which would allow for the full excavation and recording of the remains in advance of further groundworks, allowing their preservation by record.

Zone 5

Although this zone appears to be heavily disturbed by the insertion of services below the street level, archaeological deposits may survive as 'islands' in between this later disturbance. It is also possible that such deposits may survive intact, below the limits of service trenches. It is therefore recommended that any below-ground work carried out before and during the development be monitored by a qualified archaeologist. Should significant archaeological remains be recorded during this monitoring, provision should be made for a more intensive archaeological presence, which would allow for the full excavation and recording of the remains in advance of further groundworks, allowing their preservation by record.

Zones 6-8

There are a number of subways and basements throughout these zones, and borehole evidence suggests that these have caused extensive ground disturbance which would have erased any evidence of earlier archaeological deposits. No further archaeological mitigation is recommended in these zones.

On completion of the mitigation fieldwork, it may be appropriate to prepare an assessment of the significance of the findings, in accordance with the recommendations of Management of Archaeological Projects (English Heritage 1991), with a view to further analysis and publication of the results in a local archaeological journal.

8.0 References

Department of the Environment 1990 PPG 16: Planning Policy Guidance: Archaeology and Planning.

Hodder, M. 1997 *Brief for Archaeological desk-based assessment in advance of determination of planning application no. C/00852/97/OUT.*

Mould, C.A 1997 *An Archaeological Desk-Based Assessment of the Proposed Martineau Galleries Development, Birmingham City Centre.* BUFAU Report 479.

Watts, L. 1980 Birmingham Moat: its History, Topography and Destruction. Transactions of the Birmingham and Warwickshire Archaeological Society Vol. 89,1-77.

9.0 Acknowledgements

This project was sponsored by Leslie Jones Architects, on behalf of Land Securities and AMP Asset Management. We are grateful for the assistance, advice and information provided by the following people: Martin Perry of Leslie Jones Architects, Dr Mike Hodder

Planning Archaeologist for Birmingham City Council, David Eden of Robert & Palmer, Roger Light of Maguires, David Hitchings, David Jordan and Jonathon Oliver of Scott Wilson Kirkpatrick. Catharine Mould carried out the archaeological watching brief and prepared this interim statement. Iain Ferris edited the text. Figures were prepared by Nigel Dodds.

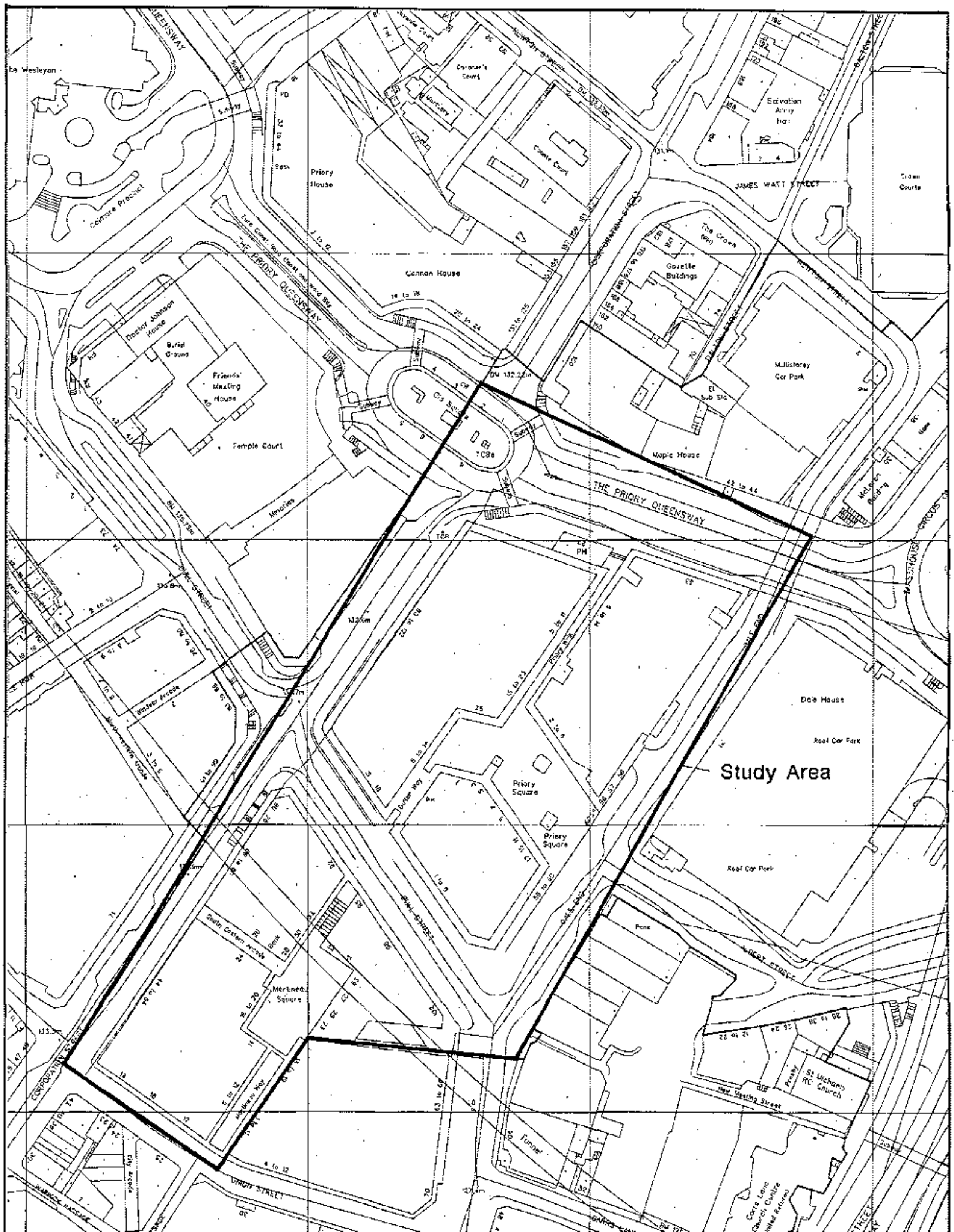
Study Area
THE PRIORY QUEENSWAY
Priory Square
Cannon House
Priory House
Dale House
Maple House
Temple Court
Multistorey Car Park
Salvation Army Hall
JAMES WATT STREET
CORPORATION STREET
Martineau Square
Carrs Lane Church Centre
CARRS LANE
Old Square
Minories
Roof Car Park
St Michael's RC Church
New Meeting Street

Fig.1

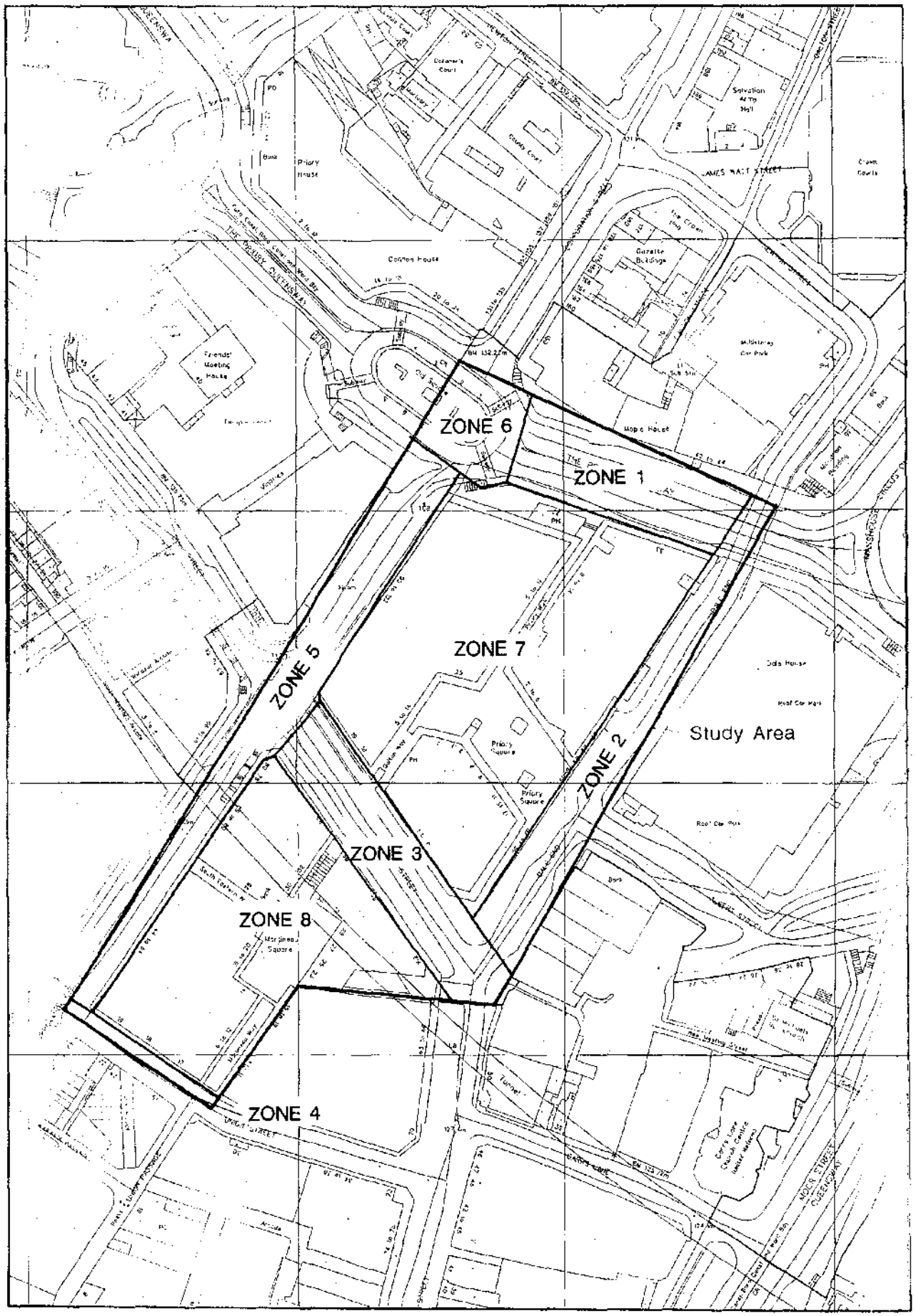

Fig. 2

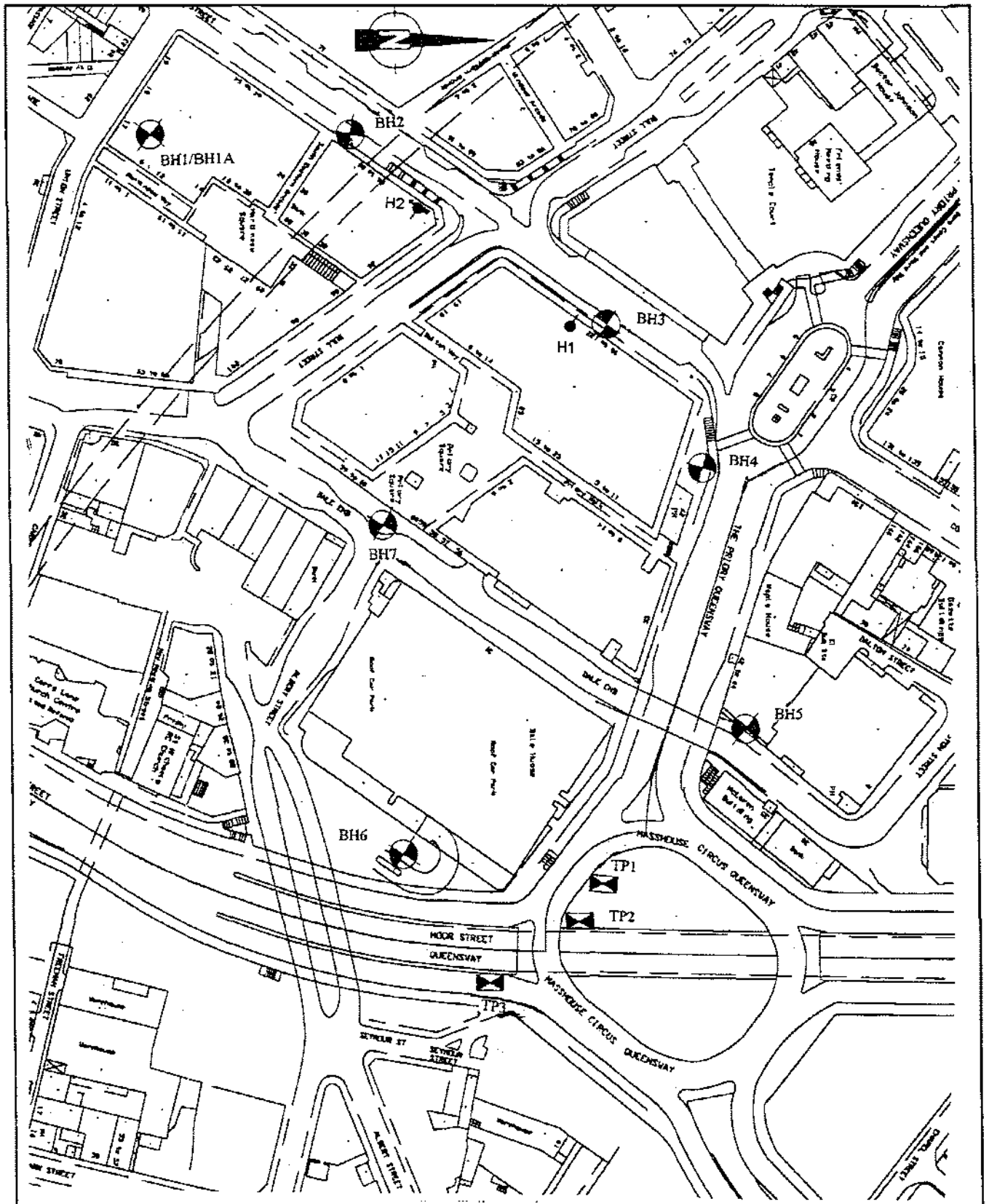

Fig.3

An Archaeological Watching Brief

of the Proposed Martineau Galleries Development,

Birmingham City Centre

Interim Statement

1.0 Summary

No sealed archaeological deposits were recorded during the recent monitoring of geotechnical work and service trial-pits. However, a deep layer of material recorded in Corporation Street, which is thought to have been imported to raise the ground level prior to the insertion of the street itself, may seal earlier archaeological deposits. In addition, the recording of the sandstone subsoil horizon at a depth of 1m below the present ground surface in Dale End suggests that any surviving archaeological deposits are likely to lie close to the surface. The depth and nature of the deposits recorded during the watching brief bore out the results of an earlier desk-based assessment (Mould 1997) which had identified eight zones of potential archaeological survival. Any archaeological deposits within Zones 1-5 have the potential to add to the existing knowledge of the historical development of this area of the city centre and further archaeological monitoring is recommended to record any surviving deposits and features.

2.0 Introduction

Proposed development of the area defined by Corporation Street, Priory Queensway, Dale End and Union Street may result in disturbance of buried archaeological remains. A desk-based assessment of the above and below ground archaeological implications of the proposed development was carried out in accordance with Planning Policy Guidance Note 16 (Department of Environment 1990) and policy 8.36 of the City Council Unitary Development Plan, and this was followed by an archaeological watching brief of geotechnical and service investigations. The watching brief was carried out in March and April 1998 by Birmingham University Field Archaeology Unit (BUFAU). This interim statement was produced by BUFAU on behalf of Leslie Jones Architects. and should be read in conjunction with the earlier desk-based assessment (Mould 1997).

3.0 Location of the Proposed Development Area (Figure 1)

The proposed development area is located within the centre of Birmingham, to the north of New Street station and to the east of St. Philip's Cathedral (centred on NGR SP 0726 8701). The archaeological study area, defined by the earlier desk-based assessment (Mould 1997), encompasses an area bounded by Corporation Street, Priory Queensway, Dale End and Union Street.

4.0 Geology and Topography

The proposed development area is located to the west of the conjectured Birmingham Fault, on a narrow Keuper Sandstone ridge, which extends from the Lickey Hills in the southwest to Sutton Coldfield in the northeast (OS Solid Geology sheet 168). The drift geology comprises sand, with bands of clayey sand and gravel (OS Drift Geology sheet 168, Watts 1980). The area is situated on an elevated piece of land which slopes rapidly down towards the Rea valley to the south and the historic markets area, centred on the Bull Ring, to the southwest.

5.0 Zones of Archaeological Potential (Figure 2)

Eight zones of potential archaeological survival were identified by the earlier desk-based assessment. A description of these is included below.

Zone 1 comprises the lower end of Priory Queensway, which originally lay within the grounds of the Priory of St. Thomas, and subsequently represented the eastern access to the Georgian Square. The raising of the modern Priory Queensway to compensate for the downward slope from Upper Priory to Lower Priory suggests that archaeological deposits associated with the historic street level may survive in this zone.

Zone 2 extends along the length of Dale End, one of the earliest roads in medieval Birmingham, and one which is thought to mark the eastern limit of the medieval town. A comparison of the ground level information from 1890 with later Ordnance Survey maps suggests that no significant changes have occurred in the street level. In addition, photographic evidence and the raising of Priory Queensway suggests that a significant dip, at the point where Dale End feeds under that road, may represent its original street level.

Zone 3 comprises the line of Bull Street from Corporation Street to Dale End. This represents one of the earliest medieval roads in Birmingham. A comparison of the available ground level information shows that the ground has been raised at the Corporation Street end, possibly to compensate for the insertion of a subway. Towards Dale End the ground has been lowered, but only by 0.31m. The widening of Bull Street, by 14 feet, in the early-20th century suggests that the foundations of earlier structures may survive below the present-day street level.

Zone 4 is represented by Union Street. Established in the early-19th century this street is, in historic terms, a relatively recent addition to the urban-fabric. However, photographic evidence suggests that a number of Regency-style houses of some pretension were located along its frontage. Evidence of these may survive beneath the now pedestrianised surface.

Zone 5 extends along the length of Corporation Street from Union Street up to Priory Queensway. Although quite heavily disturbed by service trenches and a number of subways, a comparison of the ground levels and information within BSM File 158 suggests that the street itself has been raised at the junction with Bull Street, and has remained constant at the junction with Priory Queensway. It is possible that any services were also inserted at a higher level, so leaving intact any archaeological deposits below.

Zone 6 is centred on Old Square and includes two subways on its eastern side. Originally located within the medieval Priory grounds, this zone was later subject to intense development in and around the 18th century Georgian Square. Subsequent development along the later-19th century Corporation Street and the 1960s Priory Queensway makes the likelihood of archaeological deposits surviving within this zone difficult to assess. Although the two subways cut down to Old Square, the raising of road levels for Priory Queensway may suggest potential for survival of isolated deposits within this zone.

Zone 7 is located within the limits of the medieval town and is identified with the 1960s block of commercial premises defined by Priory Queensway, Dale End, Bull Street and Corporation Street. It is uncertain whether the location of an earlier Chemical Works will have resulted in any ground contamination, however, given the extensive basements, underground parking, service road and loading bays here, it is unlikely that archaeological deposits will have survived within this zone.

Zone 8 is also located within the medieval town. It comprises a second area of 1960s commercial premises, which is defined by Bull Street, Littlewoods, Union Street and Corporation Street. Again, extensive basements, some of which extend 8m below the present street levels, and the railway tunnel, suggest that it is unlikely that archaeological deposits will have survived within this zone.

6.0 Archaeological Watching Brief (Figure 3; Robert & Palmer drawings TP003, and TP\001)

A total of 6 boreholes (Figure 3: BH1/1A, 2-4 and 7) and 15 trial-pits (Robert & Palmer TP\001 Numbers 1-9, 11-16) was excavated within the archaeological study area. Cores from boreholes 2-4 were examined on-site.

Borehole 1/1A (Basement at junction of Union Street and Corporation Street)
The sandstone subsoil was recorded at a depth of 5m below the present ground surface. It was sealed by structural debris and concrete.

Borehole 2 (Corporation Street)
The sandstone subsoil was recorded at a depth of 2m below the present ground surface. It was overlaid by approximately 0.60m of clean gravel-sand. This was sealed by a brown-black silt-sand deposit with charcoal and plaster lumps which was recorded at a depth of 0.20-1.35m below the present ground level.

Borehole 3 (Corporation Street)
Partially compacted sandstone subsoil was recorded at a depth of 4.30m below the present ground surface. It was overlaid by loose gravel and sand, similar to the backfill of service trenches recorded in the trial-pits. A black-brown silt-sand deposit containing charcoal lumps was recorded at 0.80m-1m below the present ground surface. It was sealed by a modern layer of gravel-sand.

Borehole 4 (Priory Queensway)
Sandy subsoil was recorded at 9.60m below the present ground surface. It was overlaid by over 7m of structural debris and clayey silt-sand. Loose cobbles were recorded at 5m, and were sealed by modern levelling deposits.

Borehole 7 (Dale End)
A silty-sand subsoil was recorded at 3.20 below the present ground surface. It was overlaid by a black sand-clay. This was overlaid by modern levelling deposits.

Trial-Pits
The purpose of the trial-pits was to locate and identify existing services within the proposed development area and, inevitably, the majority of deposits recorded were the fills of service trenches. The location and character of these services is given on Robert & Palmer TP003 and shall not be repeated here. The trial-pits were excavated to a depth of 1-2m, and it is possible that archaeological deposits and features may have survived beneath this level.

The trial-pits in Dale End (TP11 and 12) were of particular interest, in that the sandstone subsoil was recorded at a depth of 1m below the present ground level. This suggests that the street level has not altered significantly and that any surviving archaeological deposits would be affected by below-ground works

7.0 Recommendations for Archaeological Mitigation

As stated above, archaeological monitoring of the geotechnical works and service trial-pits has confirmed the results of the earlier desk-based assessment and has reinforced the identification of each of the eight zones of potential archaeological survival. The recommendations made here would need to be approved by Birmingham City Council.

As described in the desk-based assessment, the quality of 19th century documentary, cartographic and photographic evidence for the proposed development area is extremely high. The importance of this resource is enhanced by the loss of the above-ground evidence of the earlier character of this part of Birmingham. Although the archaeological watching brief suggests a potential for the limited survival of below-ground deposits, it is recommended that a more extensive examination of the documentary, cartographic and photographic evidence should form one part of the further archaeological mitigation for the proposed development.

It is also recommended that archaeological monitoring be continued throughout all of the groundworks associated with the proposed development at Martineau Galleries as any information relating the presence or absence of archaeological deposits will contribute to an understanding of the archaeological and historical development of Birmingham city centre.

Recommended levels of archaeological mitigation are as follows:

Zones 1-4
As detailed above, archaeological deposits within these zones have the potential to shed light on the historical development of this area from the medieval period onwards. It is, therefore, recommended that any below-ground work carried out before and during the development be

monitored by a qualified archaeologist. Should significant archaeological remains be recorded during this monitoring, provision should be made for a more intensive archaeological presence, which would allow for the full excavation and recording of the remains in advance of further groundworks, allowing their preservation by record.

Zone 5

Although this zone appears to be heavily disturbed by the insertion of services below the street level, archaeological deposits may survive as 'islands' in between this later disturbance. It is also possible that such deposits may survive intact, below the limits of service trenches. It is therefore recommended that any below-ground work carried out before and during the development be monitored by a qualified archaeologist. Should significant archaeological remains be recorded during this monitoring, provision should be made for a more intensive archaeological presence, which would allow for the full excavation and recording of the remains in advance of further groundworks, allowing their preservation by record.

Zones 6-8

There are a number of subways and basements throughout these zones, and borehole evidence suggests that these have caused extensive ground disturbance which would have erased any evidence of earlier archaeological deposits. No further archaeological mitigation is recommended in these zones.

On completion of the mitigation fieldwork, it may be appropriate to prepare an assessment of the significance of the findings, in accordance with the recommendations of Management of Archaeological Projects (English Heritage 1991), with a view to further analysis and publication of the results in a local archaeological journal.

8.0 References

Department of the Environment 1990 PPG 16: Planning Policy Guidance: Archaeology and Planning.

Hodder, M. 1997 *Brief for Archaeological desk-based assessment in advance of determination of planning application no. C/00852/97/OUT.*

Mould, C.A 1997 *An Archaeological Desk-Based Assessment of the Proposed Martineau Galleries Development, Birmingham City Centre.* BUFAU Report 479.

Watts, L. 1980 Birmingham Moat: its History, Topography and Destruction. Transactions of the Birmingham and Warwickshire Archaeological Society Vol. 89,1-77.

9.0 Acknowledgements

This project was sponsored by Leslie Jones Architects, on behalf of Land Securities and AMP Asset Management. We are grateful for the assistance, advice and information provided by the following people: Martin Perry of Leslie Jones Architects, Dr Mike Hodder

Planning Archaeologist for Birmingham City Council, David Eden of Robert & Palmer, Roger Light of Maguires, David Hitchings, David Jordan and Jonathon Oliver of Scott Wilson Kirkpatrick. Catharine Mould carried out the archaeological watching brief and prepared this interim statement. Iain Ferris edited the text. Figures were prepared by Nigel Dodds.

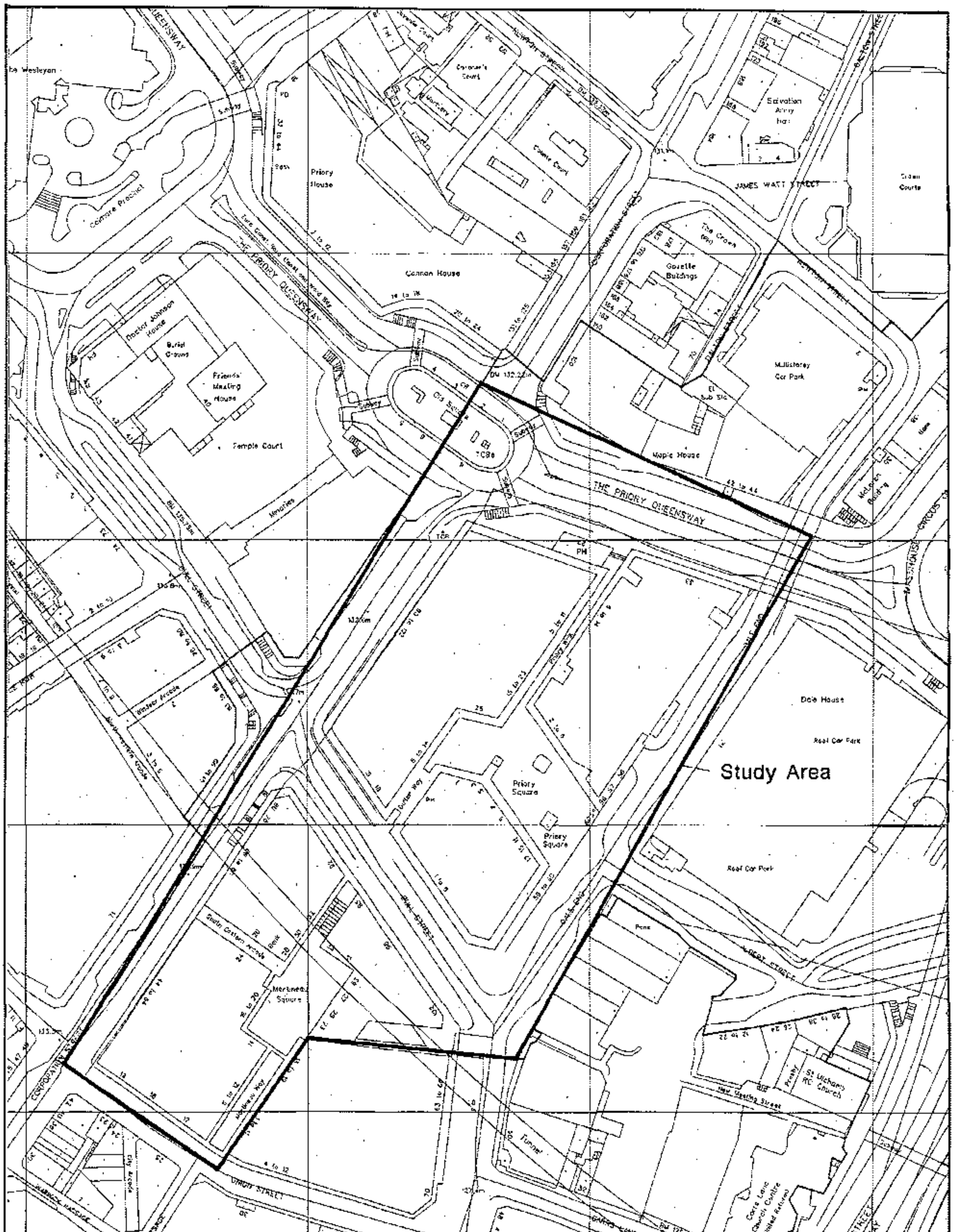
Study Area
QUEENSWAY
Priory House
Cannon House
Doctor Johnson House
Burial Ground
Friends' Meeting House
Temple Court
Minories
Old Square
THE PRIORY QUEENSWAY
JAMES WATT STREET
Salvation Army Hall
Crown Courts
The Crown (PH)
Gazette Buildings
Multistorey Car Park
Maple House
Dale House
Roof Car Park
Priory Square
Martineau Square
Union Street
CORPORATION STREET
Tunnel
CARRS LANE
Carrs Lane Church Centre United Reformed
St Michael's RC Church
New Meeting Street
MOOR STREET QUEENSWAY

Fig.1

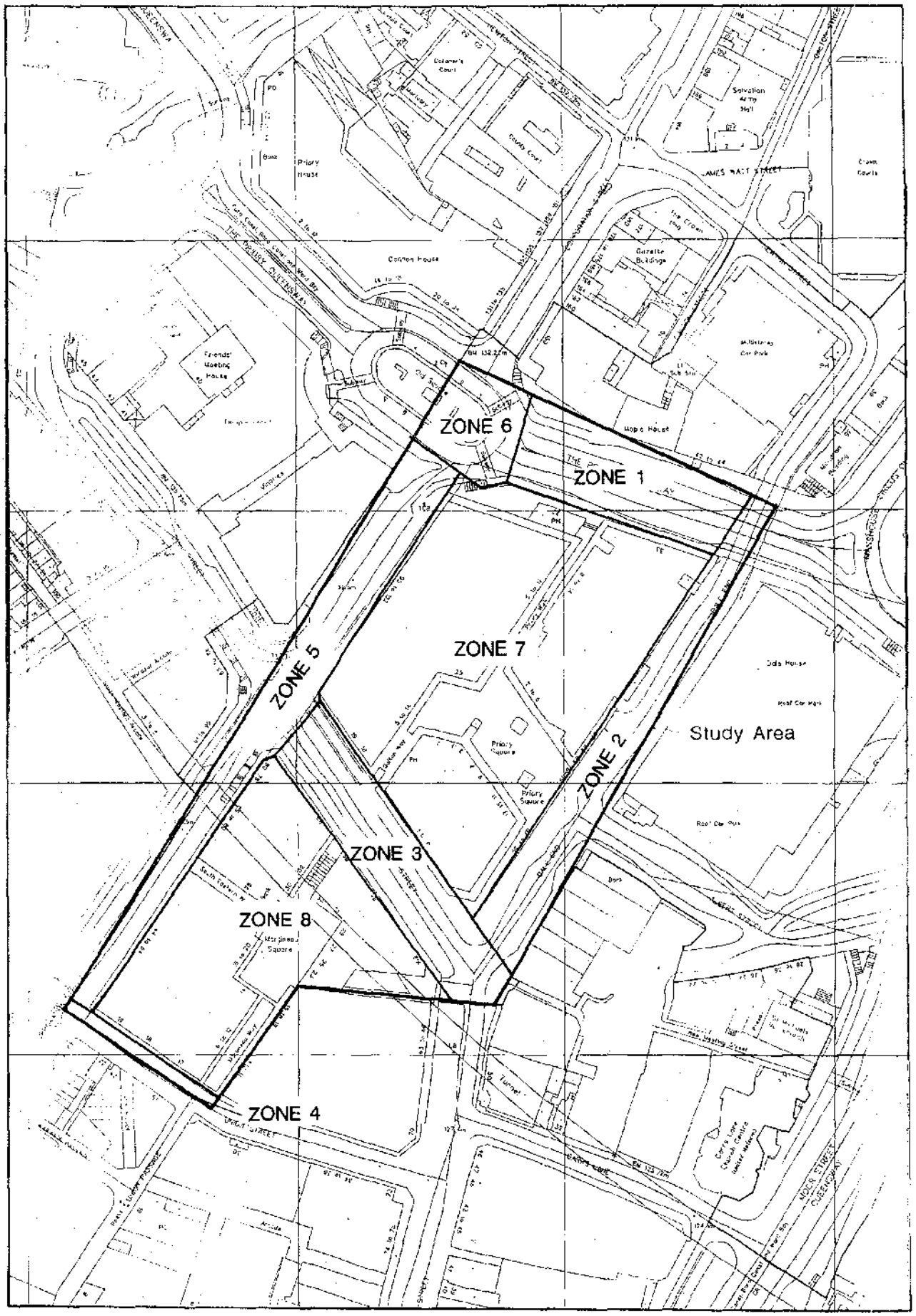

Fig. 2

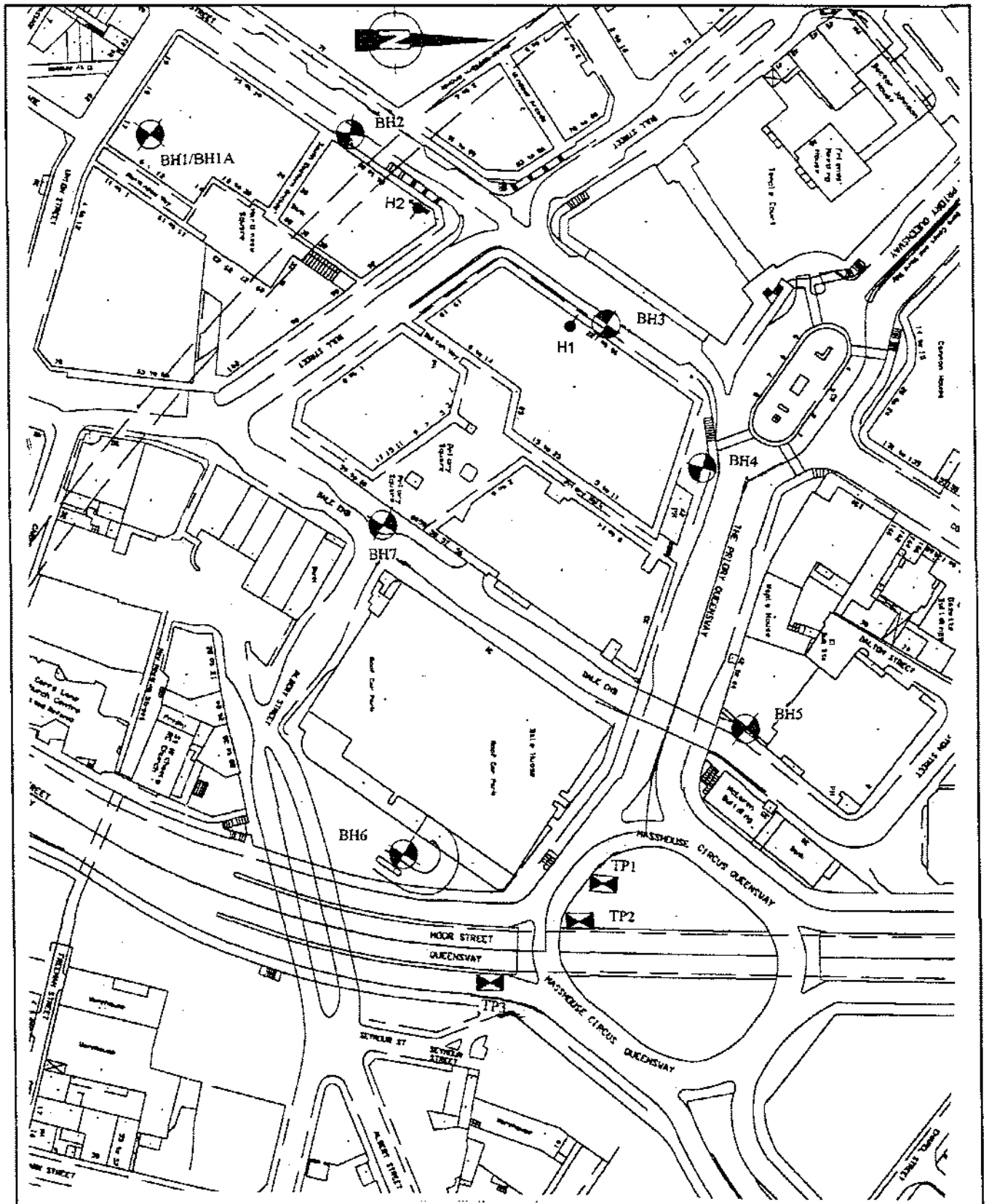

Fig.3