

Archaeological Excavation Field and Laboratory
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St George's Parade
Wolverhampton

Archaeological Recording

by
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St George's Parade, Wolverhampton (SMR 2557)
Archaeological Excavation

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Brief for Archaeological Salvage Excavation of St George's Parade,
Wolverhampton, West Midlands (SMR 2557)

St. George's Parade, Wolverhampton (SMR 2557)

Archaeological Watching Brief

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1.0 Introduction

This document outlines the results of an archaeological watching brief undertaken in the vicinity of St. George's Parade, Wolverhampton (NGR 91709843). The watching brief was undertaken in August 1998 and was intended to ensure that disturbance to archaeological deposits was kept to a minimum and that where disturbance was inevitable a complete archaeological record was obtained.

The work was carried out during the construction of a new access route which involved ground disturbance associated not only with the construction of the roadway (leading from St. George's Parade westwards to a car park attached to the adult education college) but with associated boundary walls also - where ground disturbance to a greater depth was anticipated. The site falls within the area of SMR 2557 which consists of a substantial moated manor house named Leveson's or Turton Old Hall constructed in the mid-16th century.

2.0 Aims

The archaeological watching brief was intended to provide a record of any archaeological deposits or features which might be present below the modern ground surface, and to provide an understanding of the history and the significance of the archaeology of the site as a whole.

3.0 The Site (Fig.1)

The application area lies off St. George's Parade. The new access route and wall will cross the grounds and moat of the Old Hall. The hall was a substantial brick-built structure (constructed in the mid 16th century) and was originally owned by the Leveson family. It is possible that the brick-built structure replaced an earlier, medieval building, although the site is outside the area of the medieval town. The later history of the hall shows a decline in its fortunes and it was used for industrial purposes in the 19th century and eventually demolished in 1883.

4.0 Site Results (Fig.2)

Feature 1: A wall (Feature 1) running from north to south was discovered some 11.0m from the street frontage. The wall was constructed of yellow sandstone blocks set in a thick bed of pink/brown mortar with frequent inclusions of large white lime flecks. The wall has been built out through the ground and formed a low fence to the west. East of the wall the ground was raised and the material which lay against it consisted of mixed rubble and dark brown loams with inclusions of coal and modern finds (Layer 1). The same material extended to the street frontage. This suggests that the wall was

constructed to a standard plan. The overall internal diameter was 0.91m and from the vertical the brickwork was laid in a regular pattern throughout.

The ground immediately to the east of the shaft consisted of:

Layer 1: A modern concrete yard surface 0.06m thick overlying

Layer 2: A dark grey loam layer some 0.2m thick overlying

Layer 3: A brick yard surface (0.07m thick) set on

Layer 4: A bed of black ash (0.11m deep) which lay directly on

Layer 5: The natural subsoil which here consisted of a medium orange/brown sandy layer overlying a red clay layer.

The trench ran westwards from the western face of Feature 1 but no further features or layers of archaeological significance were observed despite the foundation trench cutting into the natural subsoil.

Feature 2: A circular well shaft (Feature 2) was uncovered, the centre of the shaft being some 10.50m from the street frontage. The well was of 1.20m internal diameter and was empty of backfill to a depth of c.5.0m. The bricks forming the shaft were laid in a single thickness, measured 238mm by 111mm by 78mm, and did not appear to be bonded with mortar. The side had collapsed at its lower courses to the south. The remains of a domed brick cap, mortared with medium brown mortar with some white lime flecks, survived, possibly indicating that when in use the well had been operated from a pump situated within this cap.

Feature 3: Towards the street frontage the trench revealed a number of connected brick walls (Feature 3). The eastern wall ran from north to south and extended below the northern trench section. At its southern end this wall connected with a wall running from west to east, the corner being some 4.0m from the street frontage. Two more walls ran from the east-west wall northwards, forming two rooms. A further wall ran westwards from the western north-south wall. All the walls lay within a matrix of grey/brown loam and brick rubble inclusions (6) and no floor surfaces were revealed. The relationship between these walls and the other Features was not adequately demonstrated.

Feature 4: At the street frontage the foundation of a standard brick wall (Feature 4), running from north to south, survived. As with Feature 3, it was not possible to relate this Feature with the other recorded Features.

The trench turned to the north at a distance of 30m from the street frontage. Nothing was observed within the trench base or sections, as it followed the alignment of a former boundary wall which had previously been demolished.

Findings

No finds of significance were collected from this watching brief. Surprising was the absence of any early post-medieval pottery in an area which had been occupied throughout this period.

5.0 Discussion

In the absence of any direct evidence it is difficult to date any one feature concretely. The earliest feature, at or just prior to the site of the tower, III (Tower II) was the Levenson feature and is best interpreted as a foundation which existed in Dudley Street at the time previously dated to the 17th century. The other features all seem to date from the 19th century or thereafter and probably the destruction of Levenson Street in 1883. A detailed survey of documentary and cartographic sources might enable the recorded features to be dated more precisely and located into their context of surrounding townships.

6.0 Acknowledgements

This watching brief was undertaken by S.J. Lucrose for Birmingham University Field Archaeology Unit. Thanks are due to all the officers of Wolverhampton Metropolitan Borough Council who were involved in this project. Special thanks go to Sue Whitehouse, Conservation Officer for WMBC and Hilary White of the Joint Data Team who were responsible for preparing the brief and providing much background information. The drawings are by M. Gordon and J. Hirston. This report was edited by Iain Fowle.

7.0 References

G. Mander and R. Tytchley *A History of Wolverhampton*

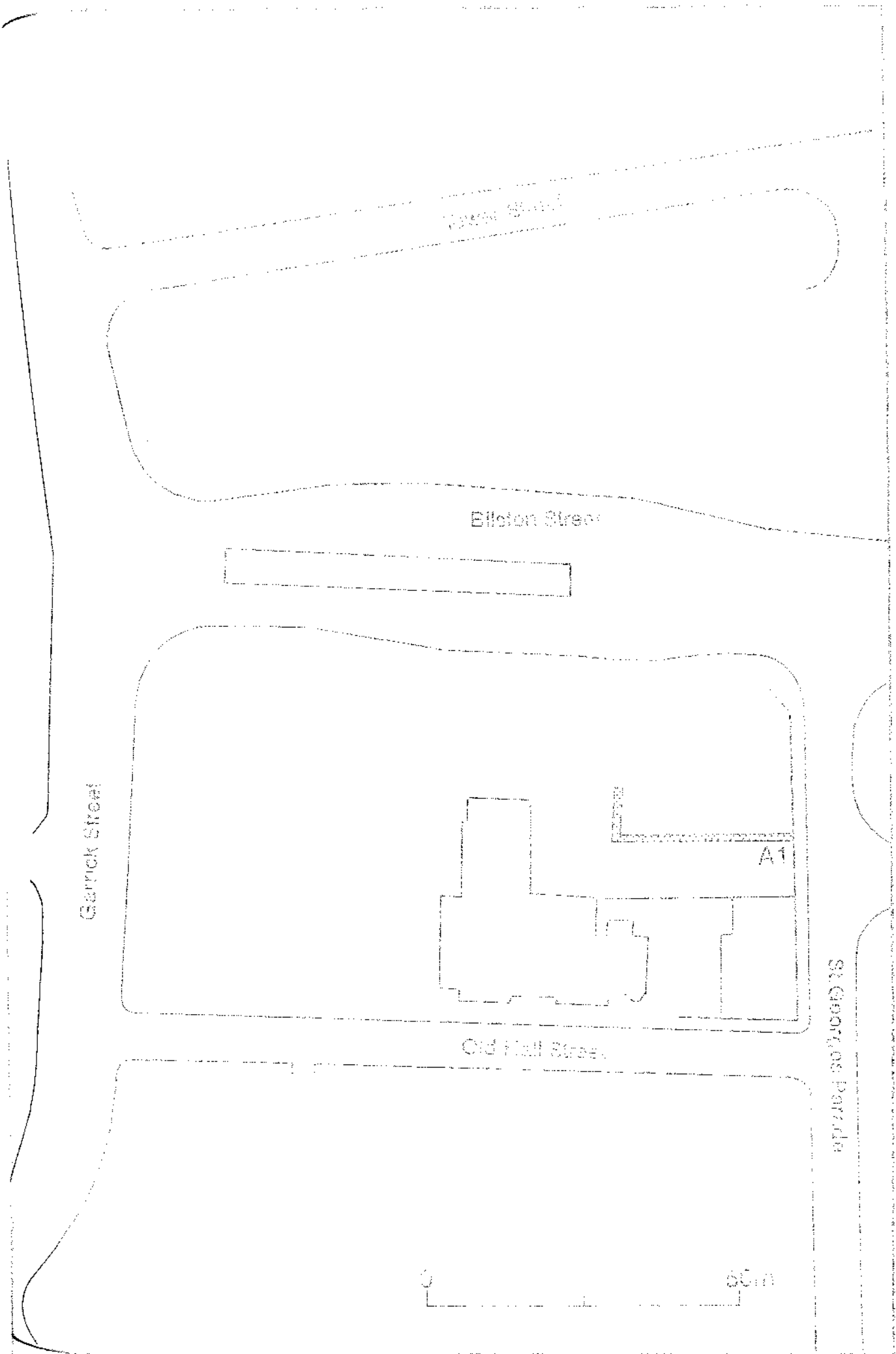


Figure 1

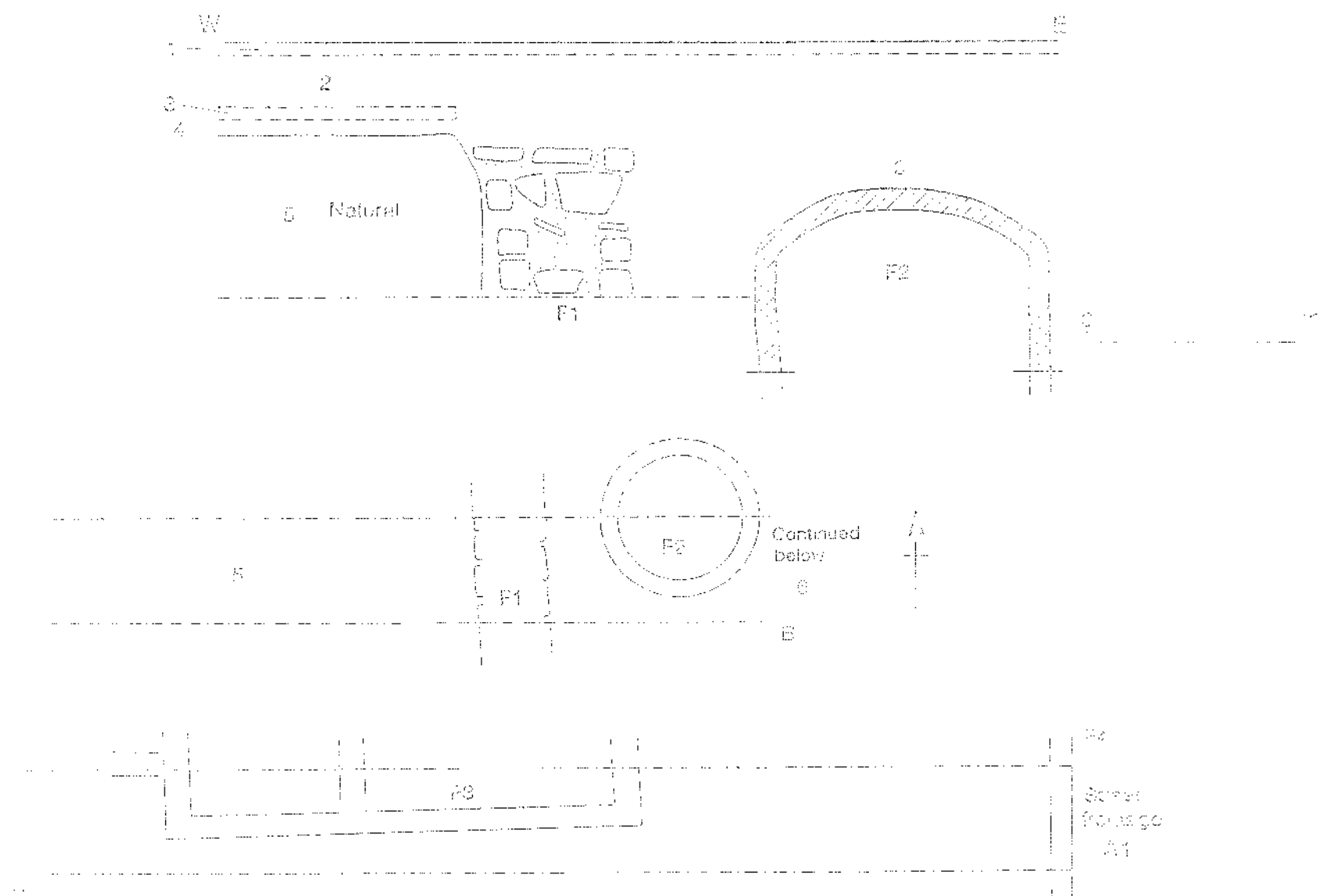


Figure 2

OFFICE OF THE ARCHAEOLOGICAL SERVICE, WOLVERHAMPTON, ENGLAND
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Production

The applicant (MBC) (the sponsor) and LPA are intending (Planning App D/0329/98) to make alterations to the land adjoining the Adult Education College off St George's Parade, Wolverhampton. This will involve changes to the existing vehicular access and the creation of new walls. The application area lies over the site of SMR 2357 Leveson/Turton/Old Hall a substantial moated mansion. The aim of the proposed salvage recording is to monitor the digging of the foundations for the new walls, gate posts etc and record the archaeological deposits in this location.

The application area lies off St George's Parade. The new access route and wall will cross the grounds and front of the Old Hall. This was a 16th century house of brick construction, built for the Leveson family one of the most powerful families in Wolverhampton at this time. It is possible that they built on an existing site as topographical evidence suggests that it was of strategic importance. In addition the moat, unless built at an unusually late date, would be likely to have enclosed an earlier structure. The house continued in occupation until the 19th century. In the later 19th century the hall was leased to Messrs William & Ryton. Part remained in occupation but much of the site was turned over to the production of tin plate goods and expanding an important local industry. The hall was demolished in 1823 and subsequent development of the site took place. A series of associated farm buildings that lay outside the moat on the south west site may have survived in part until the earlier decade of this century.

A desk based assessment (White H, 1996: The Old Hall Site, Wolverhampton: A Desk Based Assessment) of the site has been completed - copies available in the SMR - but there has been no reported fieldwork on the moated site itself. An evaluation trench by Malan & Thom (SMR 8631) "between Bilston Street and Old Hall Street" adjacent to the college site was dug to a depth of about 2 metres and "peaty" material was reported as being found in the bottom. Post medieval deposits over this included fragments of crucibles and mill stones. Boreholes outside the perimeter of the site (on the line of Bilston Street) showed 1-1.2m of rubble over natural. Trial excavations on the police station site to the north in 1982 (Malan) and 1989 (Lang) indicated extensive disturbance from the 18th century onwards due to foundations and cellars. It is not clear how extensive similar damage on the Old Hall site is, but pockets of survival are likely to exist. This programme of recording should help to increase information on early deposit survival and thus facilitate the longer term protection and management of the site.

Requirements:

The following requirements are necessary to fulfil the aims of the salvage recording and achieve best practice.

- 1) The work will be undertaken by suitably qualified and experienced archaeological staff.
- 2) The Code of Conduct of the Institute of Field Archaeologists will be followed.
- 3) Legislation (for example the Burials Act and Treasure Act, 1996) will be adhered to.
- 4) Before the project commences a specification should be presented by the archaeological contractor detailing approaches (sampling, treatment of artefacts, etc) and environmental (material, report structure, etc)

specification, the contractor must provide a detailed programme of work and a list of the work to be undertaken.

5) Any work undertaken must be done in accordance with all relevant health and safety legislation.

6) The contractor must provide a detailed programme of work and a list of the work to be undertaken.

7) The contractor must provide a detailed programme of work and a list of the work to be undertaken.

8) The contractor must provide a detailed programme of work and a list of the work to be undertaken.

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7) The copies of the report should be submitted to the West Midlands SMR, copies should be sent to the Sponsor/Local Planning Authority as required.

8) A written report should be submitted to the appropriate national and/or local journals.

9) The OCHA should be offered the opportunity to copy the archive. The archive and any finds should be passed to Wolverhampton's Museum Service on completion of the project.

Notes for Guidance

The LFA "Standards and Guidance for Archaeological Watching Briefs" can be used as a guide to good practice.

It is recommended that the "West Midlands Sites and Monuments Record" is consulted prior to the submission of the specification and before the start of work.

An appropriate recording strategy shall be agreed with the contractor and justification for this shall be both the tender estimate and the report.

* * * * *

This brief has been prepared for the sponsor by the West Midlands Sites and Monuments Record on the 22nd May 1993.

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