



THE UNIVERSITY  
OF BIRMINGHAM

**Land at Tybridge Street,  
Worcester**

**An Archaeological Evaluation  
2000**

*Birmingham University Field Archaeology Unit*



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**Land at Tybridge Street, Worcester**

**An Archaeological Evaluation  
2000**

by  
Josh Williams

with a contribution by Marina Ciaraldi

*For further information please contact:*  
Simon Buteux or Iain Ferris (Directors)  
Birmingham University Field Archaeology Unit  
The University of Birmingham  
Edgbaston  
Birmingham B15 2TT  
Tel: 0121 414 5513  
Fax: 0121 414 5516  
E-Mail: [BUFAU@bham.ac.uk](mailto:BUFAU@bham.ac.uk)  
Web Address: <http://www.bufau.bham.ac.uk>

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## **LAND AT TYBRIDGE STREET, WORCESTER**

### **An Archaeological Evaluation 2000**

#### **1.0: SUMMARY**

This report describes the results of an archaeological evaluation within land at Tybridge Street, Worcester (NGR SO 8435 5483) on the western bank on the River Severn. The evaluation was undertaken by Birmingham University Field Archaeology Unit on behalf of AXA Equity & Law Life Assurance Society plc. Six trenches were excavated on the site. The aims of the evaluation were to assess the site for any archaeological remains, in particular the possible presence of a causeway leading from the nearby bridging point, and any associated settlement.

Undated water-deposited silts were recorded at the base of the trenches, overlain by modern build-up deposits sealed by modern ground surfaces. No archaeological features or layers were recorded.

#### **2.0: INTRODUCTION**

This report describes the results of archaeological trial trenching located within land at Tybridge Street, Worcester (centred on NGR SO 8435 5483, Fig 1). Birmingham University Field Archaeology Unit was commissioned to undertake the evaluation by V & A Project Management on behalf of AXA Equity & Law Life Assurance Society plc, ahead of a proposal for redevelopment of the site.

The evaluation was undertaken in accordance with the guidelines contained in Planning Policy Guidance Note 16 (Department of the Environment, November 1990) and in line with the archaeological policies in the City of Worcester Local Plan, in particular BE20-BE22 and with reference to BE23. The methodology of the evaluation conforms to a Design Brief (Worcester City Museum Archaeology Section and a Written Scheme of Investigation (BUFAU 2000) approved by the Archaeological Officer, Worcester City Council.

The proposed development site lies to the west of the River Severn, on the opposite bank to Worcester city centre, and consists of a block of land bounded by Tybridge Street to the south-east, Hylton Road to the south-east, St Clement's Gardens to the south-west and the railway line to the north-west.

Currently a warehouse and a disused petrol filling station occupy the site, fronting on Tybridge Street. The warehouse is a multi-phase building incorporating a Grade II listed Georgian building (WCM 80539/94020). The areas around these buildings are disused car parks, with a few small areas of landscaping.

The archaeological background is described in detail in the desk-based assessment (Digwall 2000) which identified a number of aspects of possible archaeological potential

within the proposed development site, as follows:

- 1: Evidence of prehistoric activity within the Seven floodplain, and evidence for the contemporary river environment, possibly including associated waterlogged deposits.
- 2: Evidence of a causeway of Roman or Saxon date, leading to a bridging point.
- 3: Evidence for medieval activity along the Tybridge Street frontage.
- 4: Evidence for defensive or other ditches, which could potentially contain waterlogged deposits and finds.
- 5: Evidence of post-medieval settlement, industry, or other activity.

### **3.0: AIMS AND METHODOLOGY**

#### **3.1: Aims**

The purpose of the archaeological evaluation was:

- 1: To determine the extent, type, state of preservation, date, vulnerability, documentation and quality of setting, relating to archaeological remains within/immediately adjacent to the site.
- 2: In particular it was intended to provide information concerning the potential of the site to contain: (i) palaeoenvironmental remains, and (ii) to assess the nature and extent of disturbances caused by the current/past land uses.
- 3: To assess the potential contribution of the site to the following research questions: (i) evidence of prehistoric/later activity within the floodplain, (ii) evidence of the origins and development of the causeway, (iii) evidence for medieval/later defensive works, including bridges, (iv) evidence for the post-medieval use of the Tybridge Street area.

#### **3.2: Methodology**

The evaluation was undertaken when part of the site was occupied by standing buildings. A total of six trenches (Fig. 2), two within the warehouse (Trenches 1 and 2), two on the northeastern side of the warehouse (Trenches 3 and 4), one on the Tybridge Street frontage (Trench 5) and one on the southwestern side of the warehouse (Trench 6), were excavated by machine under archaeological supervision. The natural subsoil was not located in any trench. Excavation ceased when the water-table was recorded. Because of the depth of modern infill in the warehouse the trenches were widened to 3m and stepped at a depth of 2m to enable archaeological recording of the trenches to be carried out safely, and to prevent collapse. Trench 3 was reduced to a length of 10m because of limited space for machine working. Trench 5 was reduced to a length of 5.7m and located to the southeast of its original position on the trench plan due to the proximity of live services and in agreement with the Archaeological Officer, Worcester City Council.

The stratigraphy was recorded by means of pre-printed pro-formas for contexts and features, drawings and photography, even when no archaeological, or possible archaeological, deposits were encountered.

## 4.0: RESULTS

### 4.1: Trench 1 (Figs. 2-3)

The trench measured 19m in length and 3m in width and was cut on a northwest/southeast alignment. It was located within the northeastern section of the warehouse. The trench was excavated to a depth of 4.2m at the southeastern end, the water-table being recorded at 3.7m. The northwestern end was excavated to a depth of 2.3m.

The earliest deposit, an organic brown-grey silt-clay (1004) was recorded at a depth of 3.7m below the modern ground surface, at the southeastern end of the trench. This was overlain by an organic black silt-clay with occasional broken brick and tile fragments (1003) which was a maximum of 1.2m deep. A rubble, brick and mortar layer (1002) measuring 2m in depth overlay this.

The earliest deposit at the northwestern end of the trench was a red-brown clay with gravel (1009), recorded at a depth of 1.9m. This deposit contained charcoal. Cut into this layer a series of brick cellar walls were recorded (1007, 1010: not illustrated; 1014, 1015 and 1016) truncated at a depth of 0.9m, and at least 1.3m deep. Infilling the cellars were a series of rubble deposits (1006: not illustrated; 1008, 1011, 1012, 1013, 1017 and 1018). Sealing the cellars were a series of levelling layers (1005: not illustrated; 1001) consisting of brick, rubble, clinker and ash, measuring 1m in depth. In turn a 0.2m thick layer of reinforced concrete (1000) forming the warehouse floor overlay this.

Apart from occasional broken brick and tile fragments, layers 1003, 1004 and 1009 contained no dateable finds. The levelling layers (1001 and 1002) and cellar deposits (1006, 1008, 1011, 1012, 1013, 1017 and 1018) contained pottery from the 18<sup>th</sup>, 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries.

### 4.2: Trench 2 (Fig. 2)

The trench measured 20m in length and 2.8m in width, cut on a northwest/southeast alignment. It was located in the southwest section of the warehouse. The trench was excavated to a depth of 2.55m, with a sondage excavated to a depth of 3.2m at the southeastern end. The water-table was not reached.

The earliest deposit, an organic grey-black silt containing occasional broken brick fragments (2003), was recorded at a depth of 2.3m in the southeast sondage. Overlying this was a layer of gravel, rubble and modern debris (2002) measuring 1m in depth. This was overlain by a series of levelling layers containing silt and rubble (2001) measuring a maximum depth of 2.3m at the southeastern end. These deposits appeared to be sloping downwards from northwest to southeast. A 0.2m thick layer of triple reinforced concrete (2000) forming the warehouse floor sealed the whole trench.

Apart from occasional broken brick and tile fragments, layer 2003 contained no dateable finds. The levelling layers (2001 and 2002) contained pottery from the 18<sup>th</sup>, 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries.

#### **4.3: Trench 3 (Fig. 2)**

The trench measured 10m in length and was 1.5m in width and was cut on a northeast/southwest alignment. It was located behind the disused garage at the northeastern extent of the site. The trench was excavated to a depth of 2m at the southwestern end, sloping down to 2.5m at the northeastern end.

The earliest deposit, an organic grey-black silt containing broken brick and tile fragments (3006) was recorded at a depth of 2.2m at the northeastern end of the trench. Overlying this, and increasing in depth to the southwestern end, was a grey clay deposit (3005), measuring 0.3m in depth. Directly over these deposits was a deposit of brown sand and rubble (3003) measuring a maximum of 0.9m in the northeast. Within this deposit patches of blue-grey ash and clinker (3004) were recorded. Overlying this was a 0.2m layer of tarmac (3002), that was sealed by a layer of brick rubble and sand (3001) measuring 0.9m in depth. A 0.2m layer of tarmac (3000) sealed the trench.

Apart from occasional broken brick and tile fragments, layers 3005 and 3006 contained no dateable finds. The levelling layers (3001, 3003 and 3004) contained pottery from the 18<sup>th</sup>, 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries.

#### **4.4: Trench 4 (Figs. 2-3)**

The trench measured 16m in length and 2m in width and was cut on a northwest/southeast alignment. It was located on the western side of the garage forecourt. The trench was excavated to a depth of 2m at the southeast end, sloping downwards to a depth of 2.4m at the northwestern end.

The earliest deposit, located at a depth of 1.9m, was a slightly organic, clean brown silt (4004). At the northwestern end, away from the street frontage, layer 4004 was overlain by a brown silt layer (4013) containing occasional broken brick fragments and measuring 0.9m in depth. This was overlain by a 0.2m thick layer of black ash (4012) which in turn was sealed by a layer of brown silty rubble (4011) measuring 0.6m in depth. At a distance of 7.2m from the northwestern end of the trench a modern build was recorded. This consisted of an ashy layer with brick, tile and cobbles (4010) sealed by a single course brick floor sloping towards the northwest (4009) in turn overlain by brick, mortar and modern debris (4008). The southeastermost end of the trench contained a series of cellar walls, two aligned east/west (4005 and 4006) and one aligned north/south (4014: not illustrated). The walls were constructed of machine-cut bricks and modern mortar and were 1.7m in depth, overlying 4004. The cellars were infilled with a series of levelling deposits, a brown silt with occasional broken brick fragments (4003), measuring 1m in depth, overlain by a 0.5m thick grey silt (4002). This was sealed by a 5cm thick layer of tarmac (4007: not illustrated) which, in turn was overlain by a brick, mortar and

rubble layer (4001) measuring 0.15m in depth. The trench was capped with 0.2m of reinforced concrete (4000).

Apart from occasional broken brick and tile fragments 4004 and 4013 contained no dateable finds. The levelling layers, (4008, 4010, 4011 and 4012) and cellar deposits (4001, 4002 and 4003) contained pottery from the 18<sup>th</sup>, 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries.

#### **4.5: Trench 5 (Fig. 2)**

The trench measured 5.7m in length and was 1.5m in width on a northeast/southwest alignment. It was located along the frontage of Tybridge Street, next to the southwestern corner of the warehouse. The trench was excavated to a depth of 2m at the northeastern end sloping down to 2.5m at the southwestern end. The water table was reached at a depth of 2.4m.

The earliest deposit, located at 1.3m was an organic brown silt (5007) which contained wood fragments. Overlying this was a layer of ash and clinker (5006) with occasional broken brick fragments, measuring 0.2m in depth, which in turn was sealed by a rubble layer (5005) containing brick, mortar and red clay, measuring 0.25m in depth. Cut into these layers, from a depth of 0.95m below the modern ground surface was a modern trench (5003), measuring 0.9m in width and 1m in depth, containing a cable and a pipe. Sealing this was another rubble layer (5002) with brick, mortar, ash and clinker measuring 0.7m in depth. Cut through layers 5002, 5005 and 5006 was a modern posthole (5004), measuring 0.6m in width and 1.1m in depth, still containing the post. A 0.1m thick layer of hardcore (5001) and a 0.5m thick layer of tarmac (5000) sealed the trench.

Apart from occasional broken brick and tile fragments, 5007 and 5006 contained no dateable finds. The levelling layers, (5002 and 5005) and modern intrusions (5003 and 5004) contained pottery from the 18<sup>th</sup>, 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. Layer 5005 produced one piece of 15<sup>th</sup> century green glazed pottery.

#### **4.6: Trench 6 (Figs. 2-3)**

The trench measured 20m in length and 2.5m in width, cut on a northwest/southeast alignment. It was located in the car park on the western side of the warehouse, at the southwestern extent of the site. The trench was excavated to a depth of 2.4m.

The earliest deposit, a grey silty clay (6004) was recorded at a depth of 1.9m. Overlying this was a black silty sand (6003) which contained modern debris. Cut into this deposit was a modern brick wall (6005) running northeast/southwest. The wall was situated 5m from the northwestern end and measured 0.5m in width and 0.5m in height. Sealing layers 6003 and 6005 was a sand, silt, brick and rubble layer (6002) measuring 1m in depth. In turn this was overlain by an ash and clinker levelling layer (6001), 0.25m deep. A 0.1m thick layer of tarmac (6000) sealed the trench.



Apart from occasional broken brick and tile fragments, 6005 contained no dateable finds. The levelling layers, (6001, 6002 and 6003) contained pottery from the 18<sup>th</sup>, 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries.

## **5.0: ENVIRONMENTAL REMAINS by Marina Ciaraldi**

A soil sample from Trench 1, 1004, was collected from an alluvial deposit. The sample was assessed in order to establish whether biological remains were preserved and to assess if their study had good potential for the reconstruction of the past environment.

### **5.1: Methods**

The samples consisted of organic brown-grey silt-clay (1004) with some pebbles (max. diameter 3cm) and appeared to be waterlogged. A small sub-sample of 2 litres was wet-sieved on a 0.3mm mesh and the fraction retained in the mesh was scanned under a low power microscope.

### **5.2: Results and recommendation**

As no organic remains were recorded during the examination of the sample, no other analysis is recommended.

## **6.0: DISCUSSION**

### **6.1: Trench 1**

Deposits 1003 and 1004 were probable flood plain deposits although no dating evidence was recovered. At least two cellars were recorded, probably dating to the 19<sup>th</sup> century as the construction used machine cut bricks. The other deposits were cellar fill and made-up ground, possibly dating to the construction of the warehouse.

### **6.2: Trench 2**

Layer 2003 is a probable flood plain deposit, although again there is a lack of dating evidence. The other deposits within the trench consisted of made-up ground.

### **6.3: Trench 3**

Layer 3006 was a similar deposit to layers 1003 and 2003, probably a flood plain deposit. Other deposits consisted of made-up ground, with layer 3002 obviously being a previous ground surface pre-dating construction of the warehouse and filling station.

### **6.4: Trench 4**

Layer 4004 appeared to be another flood plain deposit, although again this could not be dated. This was overlain by a series of cellar walls, cellar infill and made-up ground,

probably dating no earlier than the 18<sup>th</sup> century.

#### **6.5: Trench 5**

Layer 5007 was another flood plain deposit with no dating evidence. The other deposits, including the two intrusions would appear to be made-up ground. The single piece of medieval pottery would appear to be residual.

#### **6.6: Trench 6**

Layer 6004 appeared to be a flood deposit, again with no dating evidence. The wall (6005) was constructed using machine-cut bricks, with the other layers being made-up ground.

No evidence was found in any trenches of any activity, of medieval or earlier date, or of the causeway, although investigations were necessarily limited by the depth of overburden.

### **7.0: IMPLICATIONS**

No datable deposits or features of archaeological significance were identified. The river-deposited silts could not be dated.

If the proposed development involved disturbance within the uppermost 1.5m-2m of deposits below the modern surface, any layers of archaeological significance may not be affected by ground disturbances. However, it is possible that isolated islands containing archaeological features and deposits might perhaps survive at a higher level, for example in the area adjoining the street frontage. For this reason, the maintenance of an archaeological watching brief to monitor and record any archaeological deposits exposed during the cutting of foundation and service trenches may be justified here, depending on the degree and depth of anticipated works in this frontage area.

### **8.0: ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

V & A Project Management commissioned the work on behalf of AXA Equity & Law Life Assurance Society plc. The project was monitored by J. Dinn, Archaeological Officer, Worcester City Council. Work on site was carried out by G. Coates, C. Neilson, E. Newton, E. Ramsey, A Rudge, D. Slater and J. Williams. J. Williams wrote the report which was illustrated by N. Dodds and edited by A. Jones who also managed the project.

### **9.0: REFERENCES**

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*Assessment.* BUFAU report no. 646

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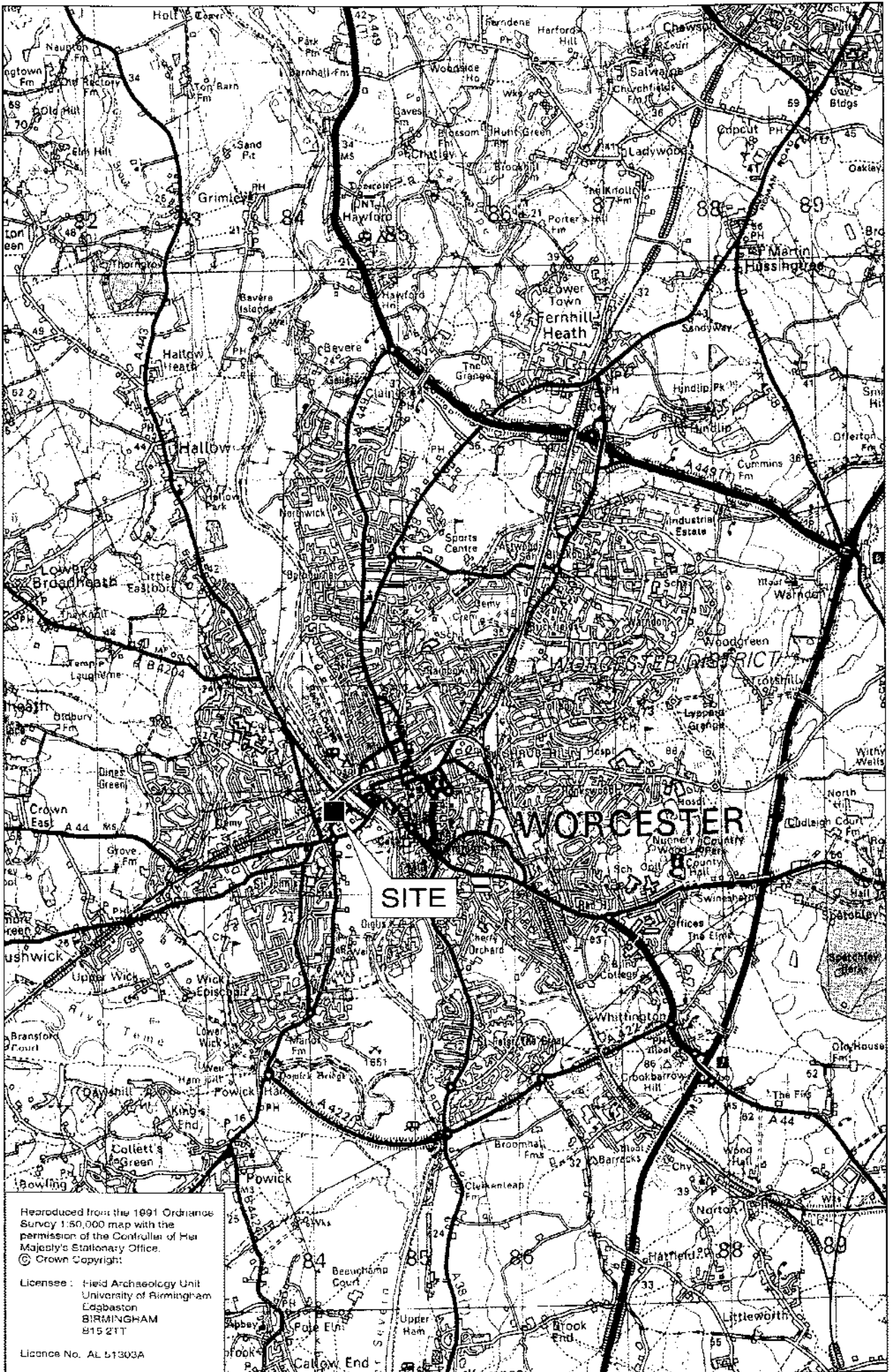


Fig.1

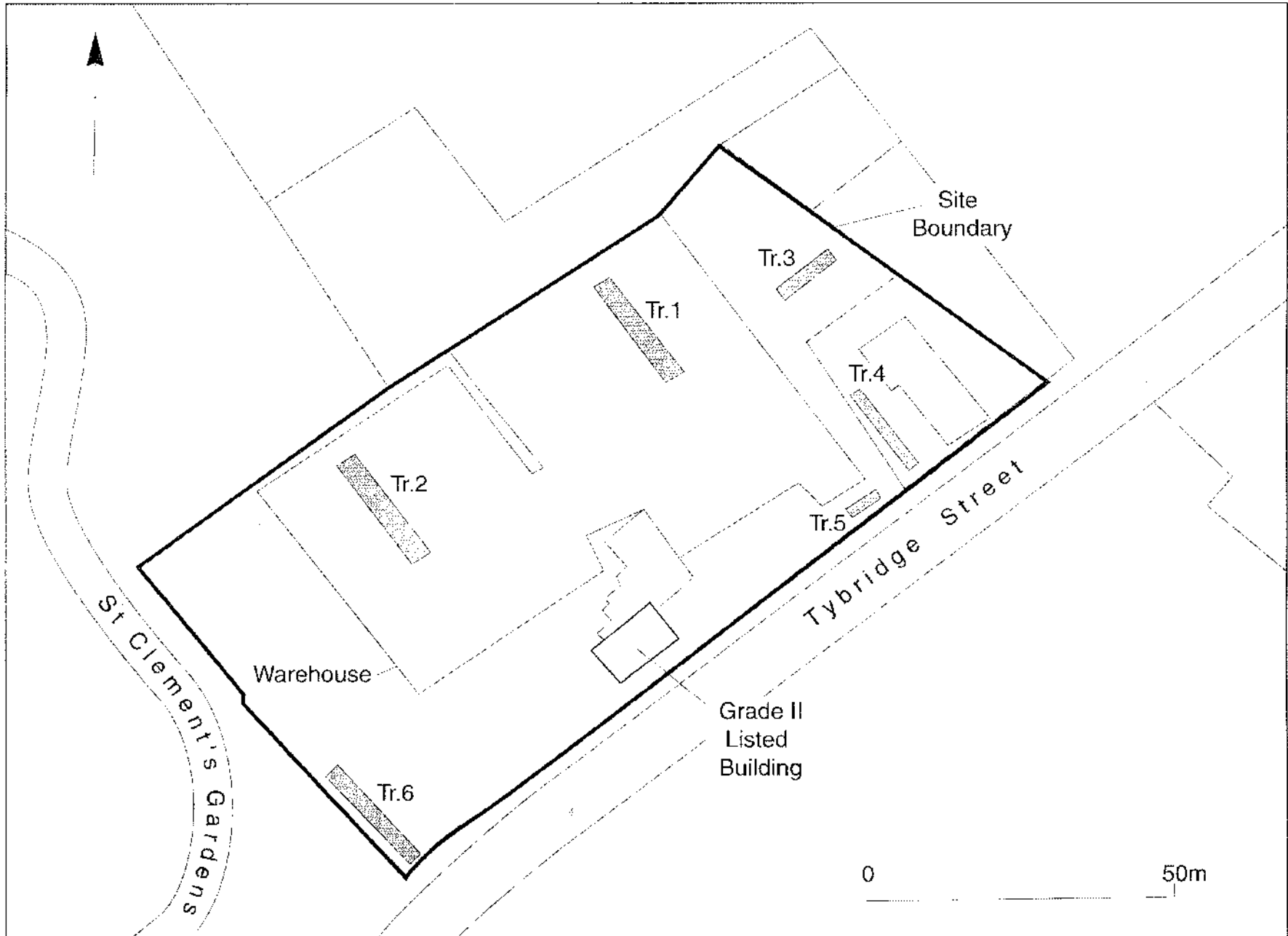
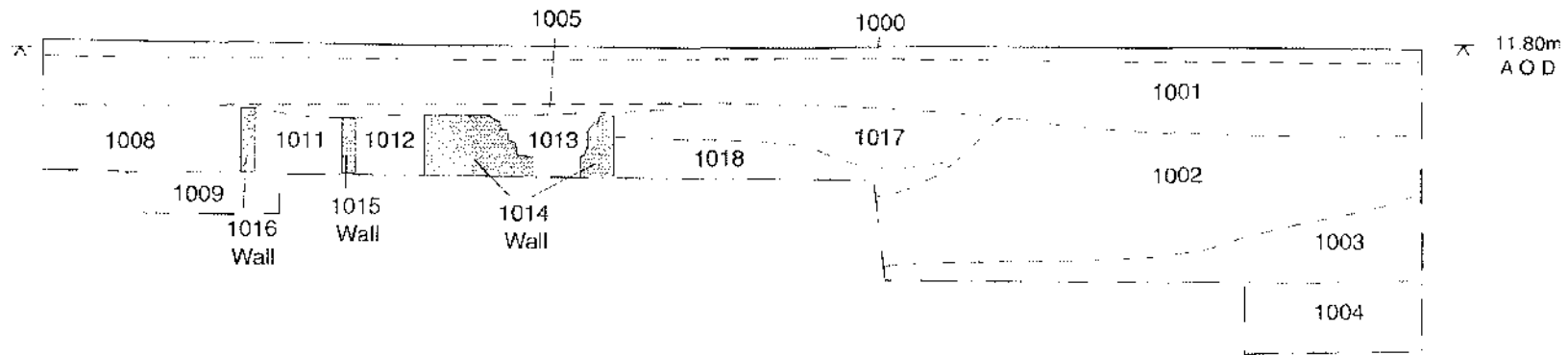
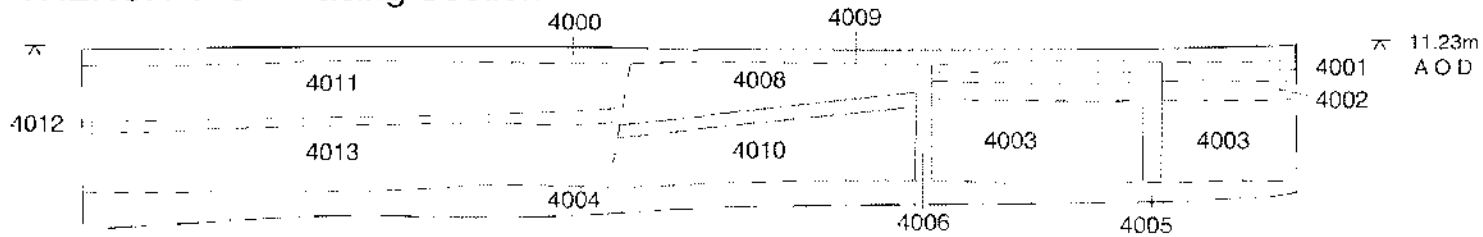


Fig.2

### TRENCH 1 SW Facing Section



### TRENCH 4 SW Facing Section



### TRENCH 6 SW Facing Section

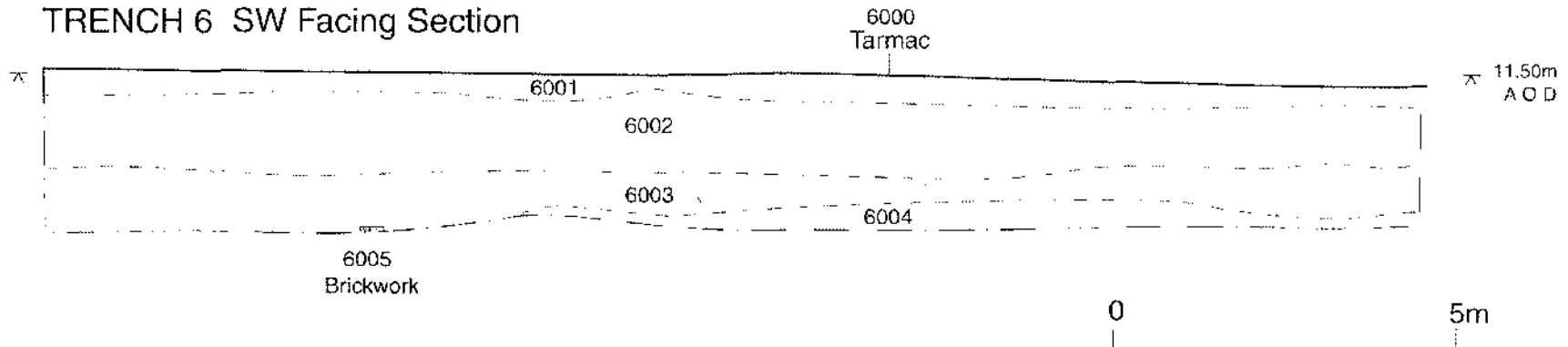


Fig.3