



THE UNIVERSITY
OF BIRMINGHAM

**Forge House,
Newborough,
Staffordshire**

**An Archaeological
Watching Brief
2002**

Birmingham University Field Archaeology Unit



Institute of Field
Archaeologists

Birmingham University Field Archaeology Unit
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**Forge House, Newborough, Staffordshire:
An Archaeological Watching Brief
2002**

by
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Forge House, Newborough, Staffordshire. An Archaeological Watching Brief. 2002

Summary

An archaeological watching brief was carried out by Birmingham University Field Archaeology Unit, on behalf of Mr. Paul White at Forge House, Newborough, Staffordshire (NGR SK 1360 2520) in July 2002. The site was an extension to an existing building, Forge House, part of which was timber-framed, and was located in Newborough village centre. Groundworks involving a reduced level area dig and strip foundation trenches were monitored in order that any surviving archaeological features relating to the former site use could be recorded. Evidence of a former metalled surface and possible structure associated with the timber framed building was observed along with a modern yard surface and boundary or building brick wall. No earlier archaeological deposits were observed.

1. Introduction

This report presents the results of an archaeological watching brief carried out by Birmingham University Field Archaeology Unit (B.U.F.A.U.), in July 2002. The watching brief was required during groundworks in advance of the construction of an extension to an existing building, Forge House, part of which was timber-framed, in the village centre of Newborough, Staffordshire (NGR SK 1360 2520).

The work was commissioned by Mr. Paul White, in accordance with advice provided by Chris Wardle, Staffordshire County Council. It was also carried out in accordance with guidelines given in Planning Policy Guidance Note 16, section 30 and the 1999 I.F.A. 'Standard and Guidance for archaeological watching brief'.

2. Site Location (Figs. 1 & 2)

The site was located near the junction of Duffield Lane, Hollybush Road and Yoxall Road, in the centre of the village of Newborough, Staffordshire (NGR SK 1360 2520). It was adjacent to an existing timber-framed dwelling, Forge House, to the north, and fronted onto Yoxall Road. It was to the south-east of the local parish church, All Saints. The area was a yard surface and open ground prior to development.

3. Aims

The objective of the watching brief was to attempt to establish the presence/absence, character, state of preservation and date of any archaeological features or deposits.

4. Method

The groundworks on the site consisted of the removal of the topsoil and overburden from across the site and the excavation of 2 foundation trenches (Trenches 1 and 2). This work was carried out with a mechanical excavator and monitored by a suitably qualified archaeologist. A stratigraphic record of all deposits revealed during groundworks and the extent of these works was made. All archaeological deposits and features were sample excavated and their potential for environmental analysis was assessed. Recovered finds were cleaned, marked and remedial conservation work was undertaken where necessary.

All stratigraphic sequences were recorded, even where no archaeology was present. Recording was by means of pre-printed pro-forma for contexts and features, supplemented by plans (at 1:20 and 1:50), sections (at 1:10 and 1:20), monochrome print and colour slide photography, which, together with recovered artefacts and environmental evidence, form the site archive. This is currently stored at B.U.F.A.U.

5. Results (Figs. 2 – 4)

5.1 Reduced Level Excavations

The reduced level area strip, to the west of the standing timber-framed structure, removed approximately 0.3m of modern overburden. Amongst the removed overburden were a small quantity of sub-rounded cobbles. These may have represented an area of metalling relating to an outdoor or working surface (Fig. 3). A worked sandstone block was visible at the north-west corner of the area strip, which may have functioned as a post pad relating to a timber structure to the south of the existing structure. The area strip was excavated to the level of a grey-brown silty clay with frequent rounded pebbles, which may represent a natural alluvial deposit related to the River Swarbourn to the east (Fig. 2). No archaeological features cutting this deposit were visible following the area strip.

5.2 Foundation Trenches (Fig. 4)

Trench 1 (Fig 4, S1)

Two foundation trenches were observed during the watching brief: Trench 1, running north-south, and Trench 2, east-west. Each was excavated to a maximum depth of 1.3m and a width of c.1.0m (see Figs. 3 and 4). The stiff red clay natural (1004) was visible in Trench at c. 0.5m in depth. Above this layer was a grey-brown silty clay (1003) with small rounded pebbles, c. 0.5m in depth, which extended to the west into the reduced level strip. The west facing section (S1) in Trench 1 revealed three courses of unbonded red brick (Fig. 4, S1). The bricks measured 8¼” by 2½” by 4” and did not continue across the trench. 1002 probably represented a modern brick floor surface extending further to the east (see Fig.3). The brick surface was overlain by a layer of dark brown silty clay (1001) containing frequent charcoal inclusions (c. 10%), brick fragments, post-medieval pottery sherds and small pebbles (c. 80mm). No archaeological features were identified in this trench.

Trench 2 (Fig 4, S2)

The red natural clay (1004/2005) identified in Trench 1 was also noted at the base of the trench (Fig. 4). Directly above the natural was a grey silty clay (2004) with frequent pebbles, c. 50cm in depth, similar to 1003, observed in Trench 1. 2004 was below a dark brown silty clay deposit (2002), similar to 1001, again observed in Trench 1. A modern red-brick wall foundation (2003), 4 courses high and c.30cm in depth, aligned east-west, cut 2002 and 2004. This wall was overlain by a concrete floor surface c.10cm in depth. No archaeological features were identified in this trench.

6 Discussion

The watching brief at Forge House observed features which suggest activity on the site associated with the adjacent timber-framed building. An area of metalling may represent an outdoor yard surface relating to the building to the north, or a rough working surface associated with a further structure or annexe to the timber framed building. This is suggested by the presence of a sandstone block (Fig. 3) which may have acted as a post pad for a further timber structure. However, the metalled surface was not recorded *in situ*, and its extent and function could not therefore be clarified, although it is likely to have been reasonably modern in date. Further features relating to the presence of a structure contemporary with the existing timber-framed structure were not observed.

The modern brick floor surface observed in Trench 1 appears to represent another outdoor yard surface. The fact that it terminates in the west facing section of the foundation trench may suggest the presence of a structure adjacent to it, immediately to the west. The brick wall observed in Trench 2 may relate to a former structure on the site, a structure to the south, or a boundary feature, modern in origin.

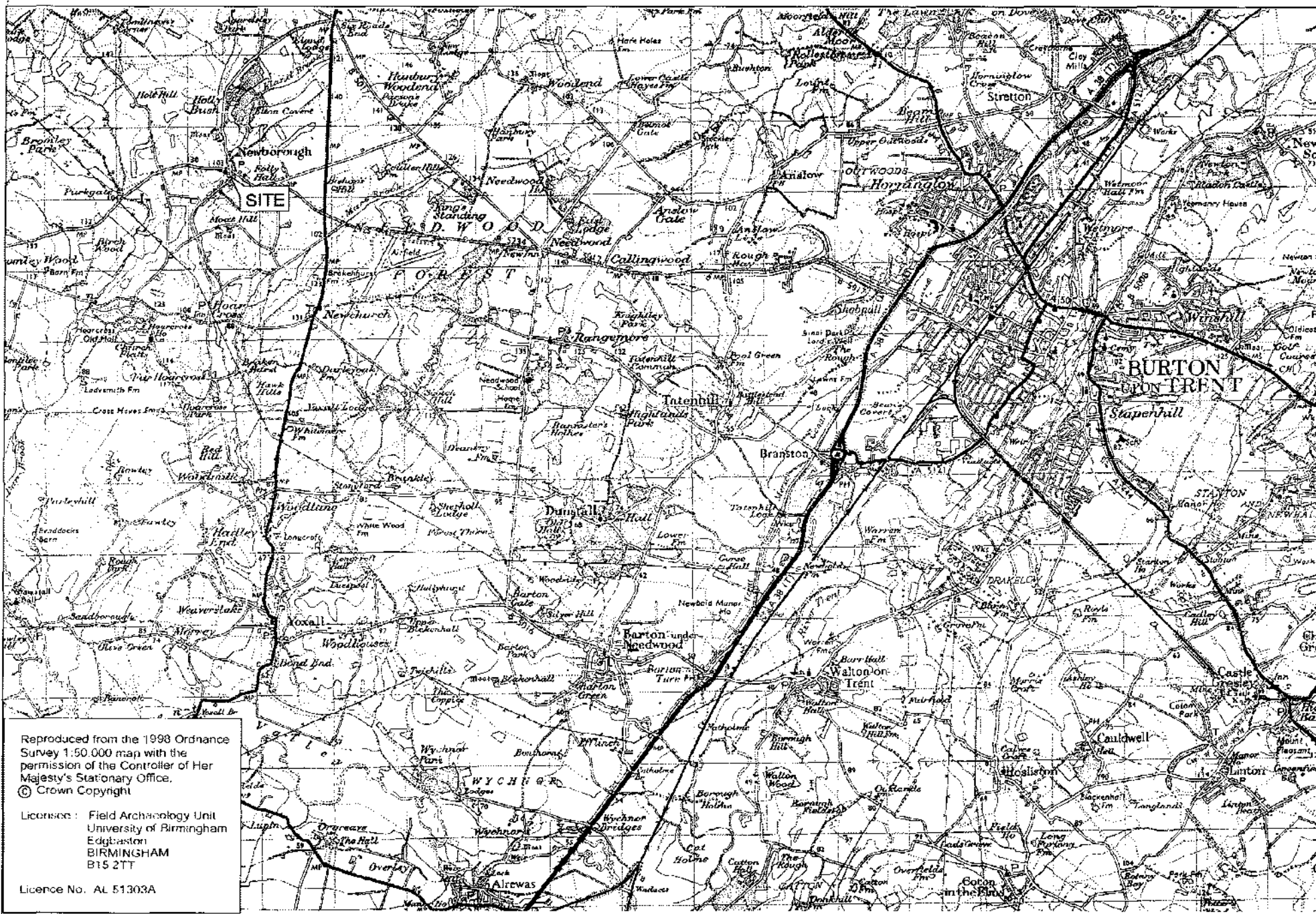
7 Acknowledgements

The work on site was undertaken by John Halsted, who also wrote this report and prepared its illustrations. The watching brief was managed for B.U.F.A.U. by Gary Coates, who also edited this report.

Thanks are due to Paul White, who commissioned the work.

The archaeological work was monitored by Chris Wardle, on behalf of Staffordshire County Council.

Figures



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Fig. 1

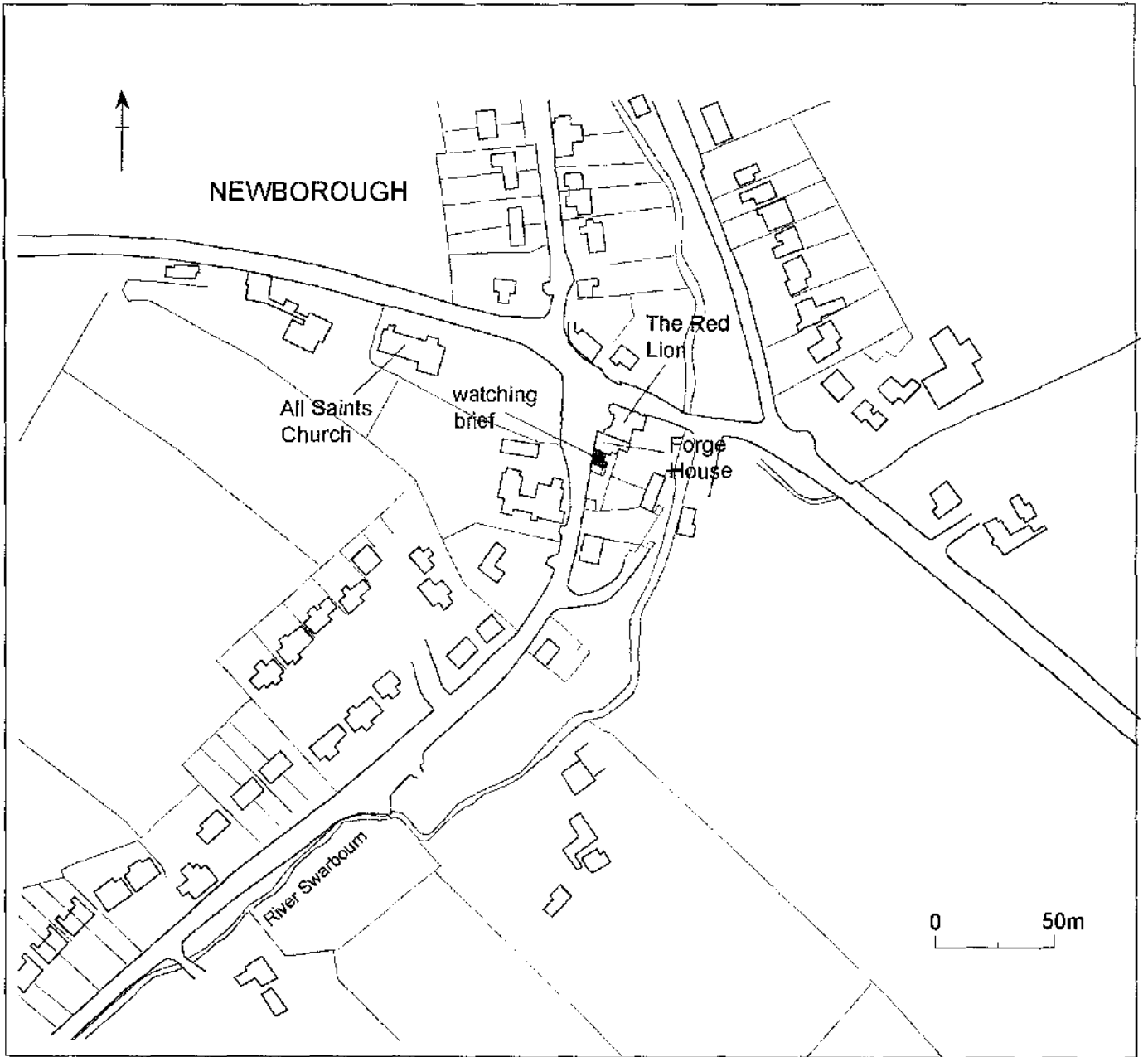


Fig. 2

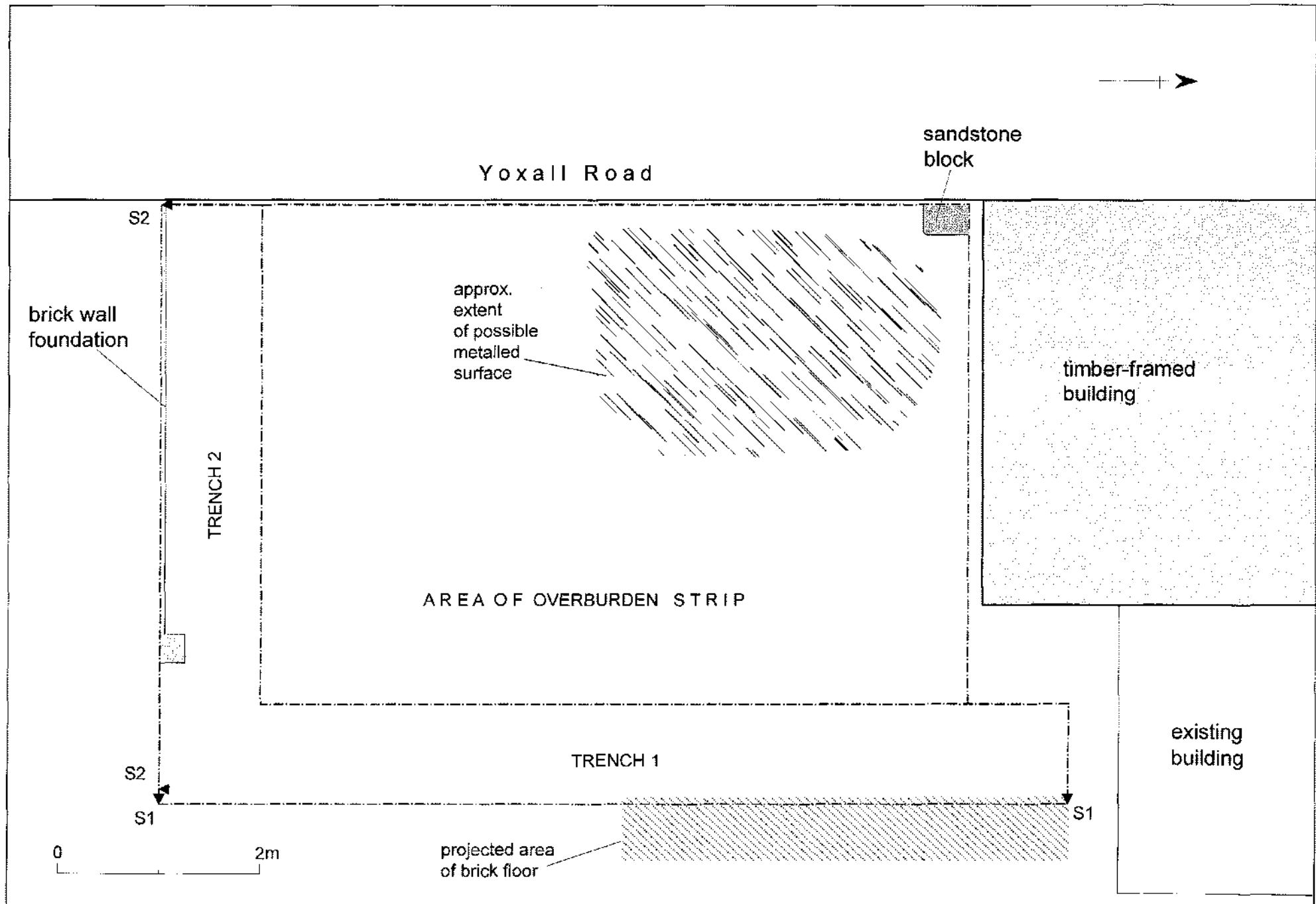


Fig. 3

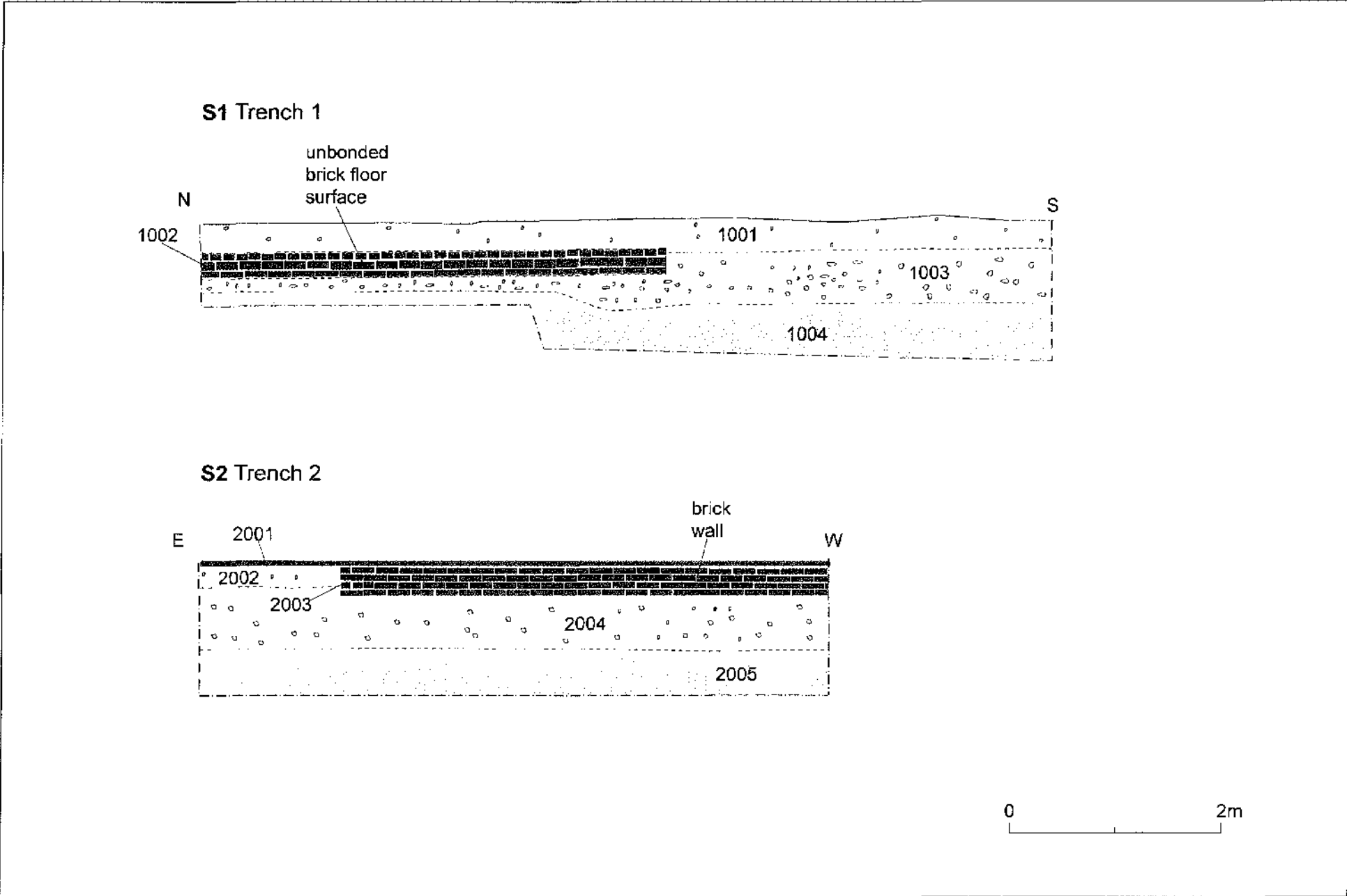


Fig. 4