

**Project No. 1058**  
December 2003

**Latham House, Abbots Bromley, Staffordshire:  
An Archaeological Watching Brief  
2003**

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## Contents

	<i>Summary</i>	1
1.0	Introduction	1
2.0	Site Location	1
3.0	Archaeological/Historical Background	1
4.0	Aims and Methods	2
5.0	Results	2
6.0	Discussion	3
7.0	Acknowledgements	3
8.0	References	3
	8.10 Internet Sources	3

## Figures

1	General Location Map
2	Location of Trenches

## **Latham House, Abbots Bromley, Staffordshire: An Archaeological Watching Brief 2003**

### **Summary**

*An archaeological watching brief was carried out by Birmingham Archaeology, on behalf of Sherlock Homes, at Latham House, High Street, Abbots Bromley, Staffordshire (NGR SK 082 244), in April 2003. The site, a barn and workshops, was to be converted to dwellings. The ground to the rear of the property, which had a gradual incline from west to east, had been cut away to provide a level surface for the excavation of the foundations of the proposed structure. Subsequent groundwork involved the digging of a series of foundation trenches, and archaeological monitoring of these in order to ascertain the nature of surviving archaeological features relating to the former site, was undertaken. Nothing of archaeological significance was exposed during this watching brief.*

### **1.0 Introduction**

This report presents the results of an archaeological watching brief carried out by Birmingham Archaeology in April 2003. The watching brief was required during groundworks in advance of the conversion of existing buildings on the property of Latham House, High Street, Abbots Bromley, Staffordshire (NGR SK 082 244).

The work was commissioned by Sherlock Homes, 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 J.F.A. 'Standard and Guidance for archaeological watching brief' (1999).

### **2.0 Site Location (Fig. 1)**

The site is located in the centre of the parish of Abbots Bromley, Staffordshire (NGR SK 082 244). It is surrounded to both sides and to the rear by buildings and fronts onto the High Street. To its west, close by is the parish church of St Nicholas.

### **3.0 Archaeological/Historical Background**

The site lies within the parish of Abbots Bromley in the Pirehill Hundred. It is mentioned in pre-conquest charters and is described in Domesday as having a priest with one villager and one smallholder with land for one plough. It was granted a market charter in 1221, and the market town was laid out along the central main road linking Lichfield and Uttoxeter. A medieval homestead has been recorded there, described as partially destroyed (VCH I 1908, 358). There are several references to glassmakers in the town between 1332 and the 1500s when the trade is believed to have moved to Bristol (VCH II 1967, 224), and a forge is mentioned in 1571 (VCH II 1967, 110). The village today lies within a conservation area, with more than 40 of its

buildings listed locally. It is perhaps most famous for its horn dance which takes place on Wakes Monday in September every year, and dates from 1226. This is believed to be connected to the rights granted to the inhabitants of the forest of Needwood, once a royal hunting ground and in the centre of which the village is now situated. The dance begins at dawn at the church and finishes in the afternoon in the main street, having taken in some 20 miles of the locality. The dance includes six Deer-men with reindeer horns who enact a mock battle at the climax of the dance. The horns used in the dance are otherwise hung on the walls of the north chapel of the parish church.

#### **4.0 Aims and Methods**

The objective of the watching brief was to attempt to establish, and provide a record of, the presence/absence, character, state of preservation and date of any archaeological features or deposits. This ultimately would contribute to an understanding of the nature, extent and significance of any archaeological remains within the area.

The construction groundworks on the site consisted firstly of levelling the surface to provide for the excavation of the foundations of the proposed structure. The excavation of three adjoining foundation trenches was carried out with a mechanical excavator and monitored by an appropriately qualified archaeologist. During this phase of groundworks a stratigraphic record of all revealed deposits, and their extent, was made. In the event that deposits of archaeological significance were observed, these were to be sample excavated and their potential for environmental analysis assessed. Recovered finds were cleaned and marked, and remedial conservation work was to be undertaken where necessary.

All stratigraphic sequences were recorded, even where no archaeology was present. Recording was by means of pre-printed pro-forma sheets for contexts and features, supplemented by plans (at 1:20 and 1:100), sections (at 1:10 and 1:20), monochrome print and colour slide photography, which, together with any recovered artefacts and environmental evidence, form the site archive. This is currently stored at the offices of Birmingham Archaeology.

#### **5.0 Results (Fig. 2)**

The foundations consisted of three adjoining trenches forming three sides of a rectangle (approx. 8.0m x 4.75m) abutting the rear of the building. The trenches were excavated to a depth of 0.60m. The deposits encountered in each trench were very similar consisting of reddish brown natural gravels of variable depth, underlain by natural reddish-brown layers of clay and sand. No features of archaeological interest were identified in any of the trenches. The material exposed in the sections of overburden excavated above the level of the foundations consisted mainly of natural reddish-brown sands with occasional lenses of natural gravel. A modern service trench, 1.75m wide and 1.0m deep, running alongside the rear of the main building, on its north-western side, was cut through this material.

## 6.0 Discussion

The watching brief at Latham House, Abbots Bromley revealed nothing of archaeological significance. However, its proximity to the High Street and its central location within the village suggest that there may be need for archaeological monitoring of other construction groundworks, notwithstanding the negative results of the current watching brief.

## 7.0 Acknowledgements

The work on site was undertaken by Derek Moscrop. This report was written by Mark Hewson with the illustrations prepared by Nigel Dodds. The watching brief was managed for Birmingham Archaeology by Gary Coates, who also edited this report.

Thanks are due to Sherlock Homes, who commissioned the work and to K3 Consulting Ltd who liaised on their behalf. In addition thanks are due to Kirsty Nichol of Birmingham Archaeology for contributing research into the project and finally, to Chris Wardle, who monitored the archaeological work on behalf of Staffordshire County Council.

## 8.0 References

- Derby, H. C. 1977 *Domesday England 1086*  
Greenslade, M.W. & Jenkins, J.G. (1967) (Eds), *Victoria County History of Staffordshire* Vol. II  
Page, W. (1908) (Ed.), *Victoria County History of Staffordshire* Vol. I  
Staffordshire County Council, Development Services, (2000), *Standard brief for an archaeological watching brief*

### 8.1 Internet Sources

- [http://www.roman.britain.org/chase/abbots\\_bromley.htm](http://www.roman.britain.org/chase/abbots_bromley.htm) (Sourced 04/04/03)  
<http://www.genuki.org.uk/big/eng/STS/AbbotsBromley/> (Sourced 04/04/03)

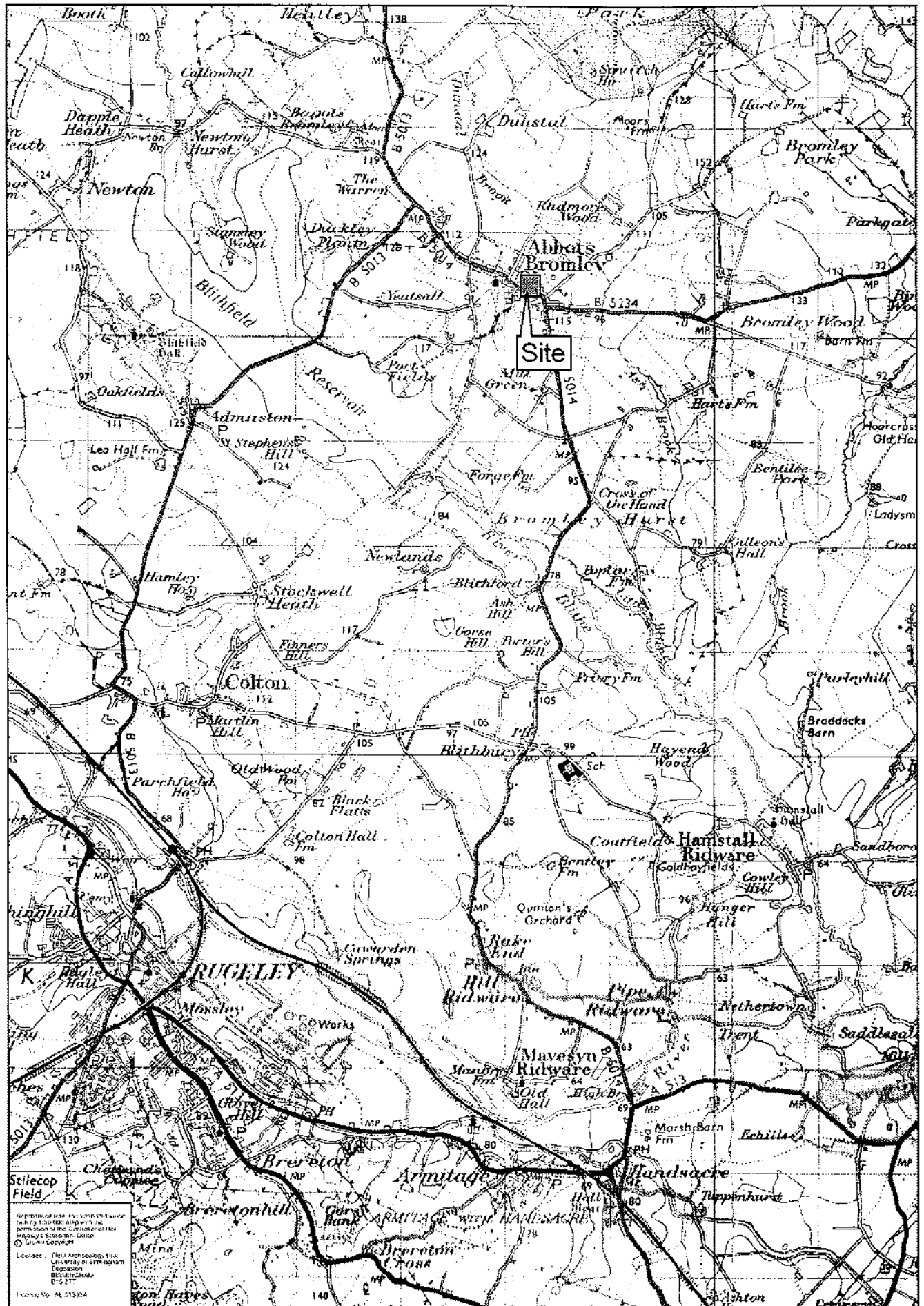


Fig. 1

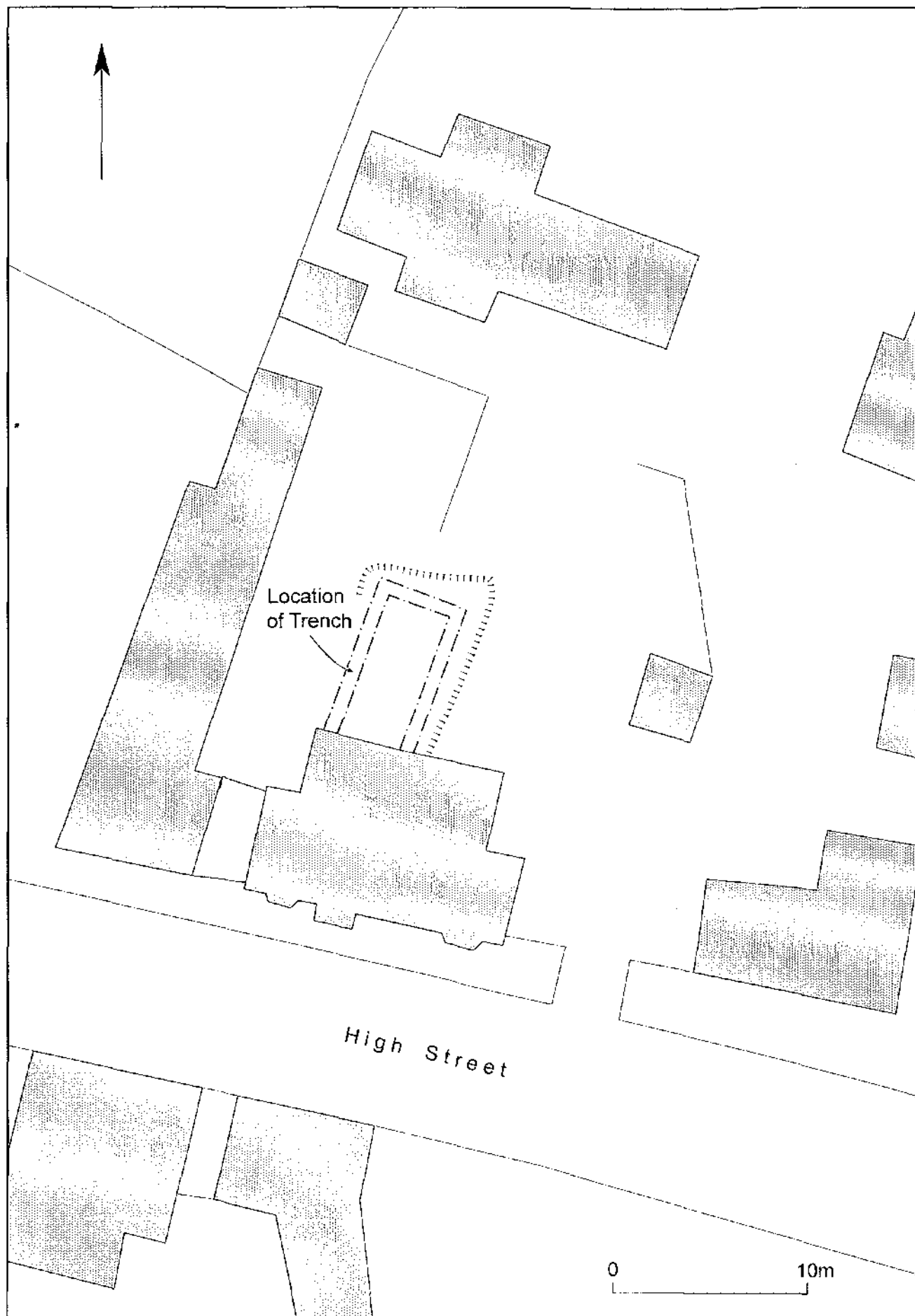


Fig.2

**STANDARD BRIEF FOR AN  
ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF**

**September 2000**



**Staffordshire**  
County Council

*Development Services*



## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The objective of this Brief is to establish a framework which is acceptable to the Local Planning Authority (LPA), acting on the advice of the County Archaeological Officer (CAO), within which a watching brief may be carried out.
- 1.2 The watching brief will be conducted in accordance with a Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI), drawn up by a professional archaeological contractor, to be agreed between the Developer and the Local Planning Authority, and in accordance with the Institute of Field Archaeologists *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Watching Briefs* (1994).
- 1.3 Any variation in the WSI will be agreed in advance by the developer and the LPA.

## 2.0 PROJECT OBJECTIVES

- 2.1 To ensure the archaeological monitoring of all aspects of the development programme likely to affect archaeological remains.
- 2.2 To secure the adequate recording of any archaeological remains revealed by the development programme.
- 2.3 To secure the analysis, conservation and long-term storage of any artefactual/ecofactual material recovered from the site.

## 3.0 ARCHAEOLOGICAL REQUIREMENTS

- 3.1 The archaeological contractor is asked to design a programme of monitoring and recording to be carried out during those stages of development involving substantial ground disturbance. The project should include the following as appropriate:
  1. Soil and overburden stripping under archaeological supervision;
  2. Inspection of sub-soil for archaeological features;
  3. The rapid investigation and recording of any archaeological features/deposits;
  4. Sub-soil stripping under archaeological supervision;
  5. Examination of any service and foundation trenches and the subsequent recording of any exposed archaeological deposits;
  6. Examination of spoil-heaps for archaeological material;
  7. A programme of post-fieldwork analysis, archiving and publication.
- 3.2 If necessary, arrangements shall be made for development to be interrupted for reasonable periods in order that satisfactory records might be made.
- 3.3 If finds are located of a significance beyond that which might have been anticipated before the development began, development shall cease where they might be disturbed in order that provision for their adequate recording or preservation may be made in consultation with the LPA or personnel nominated by them. Contingency provisions should be made within the programme of work for this.
- 3.4 The developer shall afford access to the development site for the purposes of archaeological monitoring to officers of the LPA or personnel nominated by them at all reasonable times upon compliance with the requirements of health and safety.
- 3.5 The developer shall give the LPA or personnel nominated by them at least ten days' notice in writing of

the commencement of the development, and shall keep them informed of the progress of the watching brief during the period in which it is carried out.

- 3.6 The project archive shall be compiled in accordance with the guidelines contained in *Guidelines for the Preparation of Excavation Archives for Long-term Storage* (UKIC, 1990), and *Standards in the Museum Care of Archaeological Collections* (Museum and Galleries Commission, 1992)
- 3.7 The archaeological contractor should agree all on-site working practices with the developer at the earliest opportunity and identify those elements of the construction programme requiring time for recording.
- 3.8 The project should also attempt to place the project findings into their historical and geographical context through cartographic and documentary research.
- 3.9 The project should be conducted by an archaeological organisation working in accordance with the By-laws of the Institute of Field Archaeologists. Archaeologists working on the project should not attempt tasks outside of their areas of competence.

#### 4.0 CONTENTS OF WRITTEN SCHEME OF INVESTIGATION

- 4.1 In accordance with the standards and guidance produced by the IFA (see above), this design brief should not be considered sufficient to enable the total execution of the project. A Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) or project specification is required, therefore, in order to provide 'the basis for a measurable standard' and for submission by the developer to the LPA for approval.
- 4.2 The WSI should be prepared by a professional archaeological consultant and should:
  1. provide details of the senior project staff, all specialist sub-contractors and the intended on-site archaeologists (CVs may be requested); the on-site supervisor must have fieldwork experience equivalent to at least that required for Associate membership of IFA.
  2. include an archaeological 'method statement' detailing the techniques, systems and procedures to be employed;
  3. a detailed and comprehensive schedule of all development-related works which are to be monitored (this should be accompanied by an annotated site plan);
  4. identify intended location for long-term deposition of project archive;
  5. demonstrate that the recording work will be undertaken in accordance with all relevant health and safety legislation (including CDM).

#### 5. PRESENTATION OF RESULTS AND DEPOSITION OF ARCHIVE

- 5.1 A report on the results obtained should be submitted to the Local Planning Authority and personnel nominated by them within 8 weeks of the completion of site work. This should include consideration of:
  1. the aims and methods adopted in the course of the recording
  2. the nature, location, extent, date, significance and quality of any archaeological and environmental material uncovered
  3. the anticipated degree of survival of archaeological deposits and structures on the site not disturbed by development - surviving areas of archaeological potential should be indicated on the site plan

4. appropriate illustrative material including maps, plans, sections, and drawings at an appropriate scale and photographs. All plans, sections, etc., created during the watching brief will be related to Ordnance Survey datum levels and their relation to the National Grid referencing system shall be made clear.
5. summary of results
6. description of the archive and the location for its long-term deposition
7. non-technical summary

If significant remains are recorded during the project, then it may be necessary to undertake a full programme of analysis and publication in accordance with the guidelines contained in English Heritage's *Management of Archaeological Projects 2*. If this is the case, then a timetable and programme of work for this aspect of the project will need to be submitted to the Local Planning Authority for agreement.

- 5.3 The post excavation work shall be carried out immediately on completion of site investigations. The site archive shall be prepared in accordance with established professional guidelines.
- 5.4 The written and illustrated report of the watching brief shall be copied to:
  - i) the client
  - ii) the County Council
  - iii) the National Monuments Record
- 5.5 The copy of the report sent to the County Council should be accompanied by a completed copy of the Activity and Source Submission Form (see appendix 1).
- 5.6 The archive and finds, including a copy of the watching brief report, shall be deposited at an appropriate museum, such as the Potteries Museum and Art Gallery at Hanley, Stoke-on-Trent (see 2.3 above). The museum guidelines regarding the acceptance of such material should be taken into account. The recipient museum shall be informed in advance of the date when the watching brief is to commence.
- 5.7 The written report will become publicly accessible, as part of the Staffordshire Sites and Monuments Record, within six months of completion. The AFC shall also submit a short summary report for inclusion in the next edition of the journal *West Midlands Archaeology* within 6 months of the completion of the fieldwork.

*If you wish to comment on the contents of this brief or require additional information, then please contact Chris Wardle at the address below:*

Environmental Planning Unit  
Staffordshire County Council  
Development Services Dept,  
Riverway, Stafford ST16 3TJ  
Tel. (01785) 277295 - Fax (01785) 277364

**Barn and Workshop Conversion on the High Street, Abbots Bromley,  
Staffordshire**

**Written Scheme of Investigation for an Archaeological Watching Brief**

**Planning Application No. CU/01967/046**

**1.0 Introduction**

This document outlines the programme of work required to undertake a watching brief at the above site. It forms a written scheme of investigation requested by the Development Services Department, Staffordshire County Council. Any variation in the scope of work would be agreed with Chris Wardle, Historic Environment Officer (Archaeology) for Staffordshire County Council, before implementation.

The work will be carried out during the excavation of groundworks associated with the conversion of existing buildings on the site.

**2.0 Aims**

The archaeological watching brief is 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.

These aims will be achieved through a programme of archaeological monitoring visits to the site during all below-ground works.

**3.0 The Site**

The site is centred on NGR SK 082 244, and lies within the parish of Bromley in the Pirehill Hundred. It is mentioned in pre-conquest charters and is described in Domesday as having a priest with 1 villager and 1 smallholder with land for 1 plough. It was granted a market charter in 1221, and the market town was laid out along the central main road linking Lichfield and Uttoxeter. A medieval homestead has been recorded there, described as partially destroyed (VCH I, 358). There are several references to glassmakers in the town between 1332 and the 1500's when the trade is believed to have moved to Bristol (VCH II, 224), and a forge is mentioned in 1571 (VCH II, 110). The village today lies within a conservation area, with more than forty of its buildings listed locally. It is perhaps most famous for its horn dance which takes place on Wakes Monday in September every year, and dates from 1226.

## **4.0 Archaeological Watching Brief**

### 4.1: Aims

The aims of the archaeological watching brief will be

- to monitor all below-ground works
- to record the location, extent, date, character, condition, significance and quality of any surviving archaeological remains affected by the development works.
- to identify all previously unrecorded sites in order to update the SMR.
- to preserve all archaeological deposits 'by record', and conserve for long term conservation and future analysis all artefactual/cofactual material recovered from the site.

### 4.2: Method

All ground works will be monitored and supervised by a suitably qualified archaeologist. Following the stripping of topsoil and modern overburden the sub-soil will be inspected for archaeological features and deposits. Spoil heaps will be examined and datable material recovered. Any archaeological deposits and features revealed during ground works will be excavated and recorded. All artefacts will be recovered and a programme of post-excavation analysis will be undertaken following the fieldwork.

## **5.0: Staffing**

The fieldwork will be monitored for BUFAU by Kirsty Nichol (Assistant Project Manager, BUFAU).

Specialist staff will be, where appropriate:

Marina Ciaraldi - charred plant remains.

Richard Thomas - animal bone.

Dr James Greig - pollen and plant macro-fossils.

Dr David Smith - micro-fauna.

Dr Susan Limbrey - soils.

Dr Ann Woodward - Prehistoric ceramics.

Annette Hancocks - Romano-British ceramics.

Stephanie Ratkai - Medieval and Post-Medieval ceramics.

## **6.0: Report**

The results of the archaeological fieldwork will be described in an illustrated report, which will contain the following:

- (a) Description of the archaeological background.
- (b) Method.
- (c) A narrative description of the results and discussion of the evidence, set in their local and regional context, supported by appropriate plans and sections. This will include a site location plan and any other maps relevant to the fieldwork.
- (d) Summary of the finds and environmental evidence.
- (e) Specialist assessments of the finds and environmental evidence.

Two copies of the report will be submitted to the Staffordshire Sites and Monuments Record, and two to the Local Planning Authority accompanied by a completed *Activity and Source Submission Form*. A summary of the work will be offered to West Midlands Archaeology and any other appropriate journal.

#### **7.0: Archive**

The site archive will be prepared according to guidelines set down in Appendix 3 of the Management of Archaeology Projects (English Heritage, 1991), the Guidelines for the Preparation of Excavation Archives for Long-term Storage (UKIC, 1990) and Standards in the Museum Care of Archaeological Collections (Museum and Art Galleries Commission, 1992). It is intended that the archive will be deposited with an appropriate museum, such as the Potteries Museum and Art Gallery, Stoke-on-Trent, with the prior notification and agreement of the museum. The *Conditions for the Acceptance of Archaeological Material from Excavations and Fieldwork*, as stated by the museum, will be adhered to.

#### **8.0: Health and Safety**

All current legislation, regulations and guidance will be complied with.

#### **9.0: Timetable**

An archaeological watching brief will be maintained throughout below-ground works. Work is due to begin in April 2003.

#### **10.0: General**

BUFAU is a Registered Archaeological Organisation with the Institute of Field Archaeologists. All staff will adhere to the Code of Conduct of the Institute.

The project will follow the requirements set down in the Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Watching Briefs (Institute of Field Archaeologists 1994).

Any items suspected to be 'Treasure' will be reported in accordance with *The Treasure Act 1996*.

*Birmingham University Field Archaeology Unit*  
*April 2003*