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Land at Friar's Mill, 58 Bath Lane, Leicester:

an archaeological evaluation 2003

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Summary

An archaeological evaluation by means of auger survey and trial-trenching was, of land at Friar's Mill, 58 Bath Lane, Leicester (centred on NGR SK 580046*) undertaken during May 2003. The work was carried out by Birmingham University Field Archaeology Unit and commissioned by John Samuels Archaeological Consultants and on behalf of BWB Partnership. The evaluation was required by the Leicester City Archaeologist, in advance of the submission of a planning application involving proposals for the redevelopment and change of the of the site. The purpose of the evaluation was to test for the survival of significant archaeological remains within the site, and to provide an indication of the importance, date and extent of such remains.*

The site is situated on the east bank of the River Soar and comprises the 19th century Friar's Mill building, a Pump House and the frontage of nos. 16-24 Bath Lane (Grade II listed buildings), a modern dye works building and associated yard. Previous archaeological work at the site comprised a desk-based assessment (JSAC 2003) of existing archaeological knowledge about the site. The assessment found that the site has high potential for the survival of archaeological features and deposits dating from the Roman and medieval periods. Several archaeological investigations close to the site have found evidence of features and deposits dating to the Roman and medieval periods and earlier investigations within the site had recovered Roman and medieval finds. In particular, it was found that the site might contain buried archaeological remains associated with: Roman and medieval settlement activity, the postulated alignment of the Roman and medieval town wall and the site of a medieval Dominican Friary.

Two trenches, located at the southern part of the site, were all that it was possible to excavate during the evaluation. This was due to the presence of standing factory buildings covering most of the site. Information about underlying deposits here was recorded by means of an auger survey. The results of the evaluation showed that river gravels are present at a depth of 3.55-4.25m below the current ground surface. Deposits or layers overlying these river gravels, are probably alluvial deposits associated with the former course of the River Soar. The date of these deposits was unclear, due to the high potential for residual and intrusive finds. Information obtained during the auger survey also suggests alluvial deposits are present, overlying river gravels at other parts of the site.

A steep-sided cut containing stone foundations was located at the east-end of the most southerly trench, 2.5m below the modern ground surface, cutting the probable alluvial deposits. These foundations may be interpreted as a riverside revetment, platform or possibly wall foundations. The finds recovered may suggest this feature could be of Roman or medieval date. The alluvial deposits were sealed by a deep layer of loam, which may be the result of cultivation on site or the dumping of material to reclaim areas of the site to build upon, during the post-medieval period. Evidence of 19th century brick structures and a brick-built well was also recorded, probably associated with the

industrial use of the site in the late 18th and 19th centuries and these can be related to buildings shown on early Ordnance Survey maps.

The results of the evaluation suggest features and deposits dating to the Roman and/ or medieval periods are more likely to be present at the eastern part of the site, close to the Bath Lane frontage. Other parts of the site may have been wet, low-lying and prone to flooding and consequently not occupied before the post-medieval period. A river channel and/ or a wet marshy area may have occupied the majority of the site until the post-medieval period. However, only a small part of the site was investigated, therefore the conclusions drawn here about the rest of the site can only be tentative, at present.

1.0 Introduction

This report describes the results of an archaeological evaluation, by means of trial-trenching and auger survey, carried out by Birmingham University Field Archaeology Unit (BUFAU), of land at Friar's Mill, 58 Bath Lane, Leicester (Fig. 1, hereafter referred to as the site). The work was commissioned by John Samuels Archaeological Consultants and carried out on behalf of BWB Partnership. The site is the subject of a proposed change of use of Friar's Mill, the Pump House and nos. 16-24 Bath Lane (Grade II listed buildings), demolition of the remaining dye works and redevelopment of the site for residential dwellings. The evaluation is required to provide information concerning the archaeological potential of the site prior to the submission of a planning application.

This evaluation work was recommended by the planning authority on the advice of the Leicester City Archaeologist, after appraisal of the known archaeological information on the site, including a desk-based assessment (JSAC 2003). The evaluation is in accordance with a Design Brief prepared by the City Archaeologist, Leicester Museum Service, dated 6th May 2003 and a specification by BUFAU (BUFAU 2003), approved by the City Archaeologist. The evaluation adheres to the guidelines set down in the *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Field Evaluation* (Institute of Field Archaeologists 2001). The project was carried out in accordance with PPG 16 (DoE 1990).

On 16th May 2003 a site visit was made by the City Archaeologist, for the purpose of monitoring the fieldwork.

The paper archive consists of: 1x A4 file of context and feature records, 1x A4 file of borehole records, 1x A4 file of assemblage summary record sheets, 1 x A4 file of photographs and 1 x A3 wallet of drawings. The finds archive comprises a small box of finds. The archive will be deposited with Leicester Museums Service, subject to the agreement of the landowner, within 9 months of the completion of the project.

While the broad aims and methodology described in the Design Brief and the specification were followed, certain specific details were altered in the light of conditions encountered on site. Such variations were agreed in advance with the City Archaeologist.

2.0 Site location and description

The proposed development site (centred on NGR SK 580046, Fig.1) covers a total of 0.72 ha and is bounded by industrial buildings to the north, Bath Lane to east, former industrial buildings to the south and the canalised River Soar to the west (Fig. 2). Most of the site is occupied by the Grade II listed 19th century Friar's Mill (LC 1550), Pump House (LC 1551), Bath Lane buildings (LC 1552) and by modern factory buildings currently owned and used by Donisthorpe and Company Ltd, part of the Amann group. An asphalt surfaced car park and hard standing area covers the south part of the site and the north boundary of the site is formed by a narrow asphalt surfaced delivery access road.

The site lies at a height of c. 55m AOD. The underlying geology of the site is river alluvium and sand and gravel underlain by Keuper Marl.

3.0 Archaeological Background

An archaeological desk-based assessment of the site was carried out in March 2003 (JSAC 2003). This desk-based assessment and the Design Brief (Leicester City Museum 2003) gives the detailed archaeological background and only a summary will be given here. The desk-based assessment found that the site has high potential for the survival of archaeological features and deposits dating to the Roman and medieval periods. Several archaeological investigations close to the site have found evidence of features and deposits dating to the Roman and medieval periods. In particular, it was found that the site might contain buried archaeological remains associated with Roman and medieval settlement activity, the postulated alignment of the Roman and medieval town wall and a medieval Dominican Friary.

In 1973 a trench was dug within the site and artefacts dating from the Roman period to the post-medieval period was recovered (SMR 50SE. NB). Pottery dated to the medieval and post-medieval periods was also found. In 1988 limited evaluation of the site by the Leicester Archaeological Unit by means of five trial pits recovered Roman and medieval artefacts. Medieval finds were recovered from the top of silty brown loam spreads. In one test pit a pale green- grey clayey spread was recorded. These deposits were tentatively interpreted by the excavator as possibly ditch fill and truncated rampart material. Roman finds included pottery, tile, fragments of *opus signinum*, painted wall plaster and mortar. These archaeological contexts were sealed by 1.5-2.0m of modern make-up material (SMR 50SE. KU).

Documentary sources suggest the east bank of the Soar was the focus of industrial tanning activity during the post-medieval period and dumping of rubbish into the Soar, at this location might have also taken place. Recent evaluation, to the south, has confirmed that tanning activity took place here.

During April and May 2003 an evaluation was carried out by University of Leicester Archaeological Services (Pers comm. J. Meek) at the site of the Merlin Works, immediately to the south of the Friar's Mill site. Evidence of terracing and levelling activity during the Roman period was revealed together with the remains of at least one substantial high status Roman building. No evidence of the Roman waterfront was found. However evidence of part of the medieval river channel was recorded. Further archaeological investigation, carried out in July 2003, south of the Merlin works site (Pers. comm J. Meek) revealed evidence of a waterlogged channel or ditch on the river side with a steep-sided cut to the east, 3-4m wide. The steep-sided cut contained stone and rubble in places together with material associated with robbing activity. In some places areas of defensive walling and foundations survived.

4.0 Aims

The aims of the evaluation were to establish the likely presence or absence of any archaeological deposits and features within the site and to define their character, extent, quality and preservation. The evaluation is the first stage of archaeological work and will provide information to facilitate the formulation of a mitigation scheme which may involve further investigation and recording or preservation of any archaeological remains in advance of development, where appropriate.
The research objectives of the archaeological evaluation were to:

- establish the form, function and date of any archaeological deposits and features within the site, using all appropriate scientific and analytical techniques
- recognise and investigate activity and occupation areas
- recover paleo-environmental remains including waterlogged deposits define the nature, extent and significance of surviving deposits and features.
- examine the evidence for settlement development within the hinterland around Leicester
- attempt to recover artefactual remains to assist in the development of the local and regional type series.

5.0: Method

The amount and extent of archaeological fieldwork was restricted due to the presence of standing buildings in use as business premises. A total of two trenches were excavated. One 34m long x 4m wide trench (Fig 3, Trench 1) was excavated in an area of hard standing, currently in use as a car park, at the south part of the site. This trench was stepped for safety reasons and the size of the trench was limited by the need for constant access to other areas of the site. One 4.3 m long x 1.85m wide trench (Fig. 3, Trench 2) was excavated close to the modern factory building. This trench was situated close to a doorway in an area, which requires access at all times and consequently only the excavation of a small trench was practicable.

A wheeled 360° excavator with a breaker, toothed and a toothless bucket was used to remove modern overburden. This was monitored by a qualified archaeologist at all times. Machining was down to the top of the uppermost significant archaeological deposit or to the top of the subsoil if no archaeological deposits survived. Subsequent cleaning and excavation was by hand. Where possible modern features were to be removed to provide a section through any earlier archaeological stratigraphy. Where this was not possible a combination of sondage and/or augering was used to assess the depth of stratigraphy. Spoil from machine excavation, and hand-excavation was temporarily stored on-site. A representative sample of archaeological features were sample excavated. Recovered finds were cleaned, marked and remedial conservation work will be undertaken where necessary. Finds were catalogued, analysed and quantified in accordance with the existing Leicester type series, where appropriate. Finds which are 'treasure' with reference to the Treasure Act 1997 were to be reported to the Coroner and the appropriate procedures was to be followed. Any human remains uncovered would have only been excavated following receipt of the appropriate Home Office licence.

A representative sample of datable archaeological features was to be selected for the collection of 20 litre soil samples for the recovery of charred plant remains, etc and will be sieved and scanned. The environmental sampling policy follows the broad guidelines contained in the BUFAU Guide to On-Site Environmental Sampling (copy available on request). Recording was by means of pre-printed pro-formas 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.

Further investigation of areas currently in use as factory premises was by auger survey. At ten locations the factory floor or yard surfaces were drilled through by a diamond drill to enable the hand augering to be carried out (see attached plan). An archaeologist then performed the subsequent augering and recorded the resulting cores. This enabled a profile of the depth of natural and alluvial deposits across the site to be recorded. Although at some locations obstructions were encountered and full profiles were not possible.

6.0 Results

6.1 Auger survey (Fig. 3)

Borehole 1
0-0.2m concrete floor
0.2-0.5m crushed stone(floor levelling layer)
0.5m concrete slab obstruction (augering terminated at 0.5m)
Borehole 2

0-0.1m concrete floor
0.1-0.7m crushed stone and gravel (floor levelling layer)

0.7-1.3m dark grey/ black sandy clay with lenses of clean red clay containing sherds of 19th century pottery, fragments of brick and mortar (augering terminated at 1.3m due to obstruction)

Borehole 3

0-0.3m concrete floor
0.3-0.7m crushed stone and gravel (floor levelling layer)
0.7-1.6m dark brown silty clay with lenses of clean red clay, containing fragments of mortar and abundant charcoal flecks.
1.6-2.85m clean mid brown sandy clay with charcoal flecking
2.85 sand and gravel

Borehole 4

0-0.2m concrete floor
0.2-0.8m crushed stone and tarmac (floor levelling layer and former carpark surface)
0.8-1.5m brown sandy clay containing fragments of mortar, brick and sandstone and abundant charcoal flecks.
1.5-1.95m brown clay with occasional stone fragments and charcoal flecks.
1.95-2.70m clean sterile brown silty clay and occasional lenses of sand and gravel
2.7-3.2 brown silty clay with abundant sand and gravel
3.2-3.75m organic black silty clay
3.75m sand and gravel

Borehole 5

0-0.2m concrete floor
0.2-0.85m crushed stone(floor levelling layer)
0.85m stone obstruction (augering terminated at 0.85m)

Borehole 6

0-0.3m concrete yard surface
0.3-1.8m mid brown silty clay containing brick and charcoal
1.8-3.2m dark brown/ black organic silty clay
3.2m sand and gravel

Borehole 7

0-0.3m concrete yard surface
0.3-0.4m crushed stone and gravel
0.4-2.1m dark brown/black silty clay containing stone, brick and charcoal
2.1m stone obstruction (augering terminated at 2.1m)

Borehole 8

0-0.1m tarmac
0.1-0.2m crushed stone and gravel
0.2-1.95m brown silty clay containing fragments of mortar, brick, ash and post-medieval pottery.
1.95 -2.55m dark brown silty clay with charcoal flecks.
2.55-3.07m organic black silty clay with abundant charcoal flecks
3.07m sand and gravel

Borehole 9

0-0.2m concrete
0.2-0.3m crushed stone and gravel
0.3-1.8m brown silty clay containing fragments of brick and flecks of charcoal
1.8 -2.95m dark brown silty clay with charcoal flecks.
2.95 sand and gravel

Borehole 10

0-0.2m concrete
0.2-0.3m crushed stone and gravel
0.3-1.8m black clay-silt containing fragments of brick and ash
1.8 -1.9m mortar (possible surface)
1.9m-2.03m black clay-silt containing fragments of brick, ash and 19th century pottery
2.03m stone obstruction (augering terminated at 2.03m)

6.2 Trial-trenches

Trench 1(Figs. 4 and 5, Plate 1)

This trench was 34m long x 4m wide, was excavated to a maximum depth of 4.0m (51.60m AOD) below the present tarmac yard surface. The trench was stepped for safety reasons and was aligned east-west. The natural sand and gravel subsoil (1017) was not exposed in most of the trench, due to safety reasons. Natural sand and gravel 1017 was only exposed in two sondages at the west and east ends of the trench. The sand and gravel 1017 was located at 3.55m (51.43m AOD) below the present ground surface, at the west end of the trench (Plate 3), and at 4.00m (51.25m AOD), at the east end of the trench. Information obtained by augering near the middle of the trench indicated that the natural sand and gravel was up to 4.25m (51.0m AOD) below the present ground surface here.

At the west end of the trench natural sand and gravel 1017 was overlain by a brown sandy silt (1019) containing gravel, 0.25m deep. This was sealed by a black sandy silt (1018), 0.50m deep. Information obtained by augering near the middle of the trench also indicated that the natural sand and gravel was overlain here, by several probable alluvial deposits of

silts or clayey silts (1021-4). At the east end of the trench natural sand and gravel 1017 was overlain by a brown silty clay (1011), 0.55m deep.

Overlying context 1011 was a mid brown sandy silty clay (1010) with lenses of yellowish brown sandy silty clay, at least 1.15m deep (information from augering suggested this layer may be up to 1.65m deep in places). Context 1010 contained fragments of tile and a sherd of medieval pottery. Overlying context 1010, close to the centre of the trench was an organic black sandy clay silt with lenses of yellow silty sand (1004), 1.6m wide and 0.40m deep, containing sherds of medieval pottery, fragments of post-medieval tile, worked stone, iron nails and animal bone. Context 1004 may be the silted up fill of a channel (F103), aligned roughly northeast-southwest.

Overlying contexts 1010 and 1004 at the west end of the trench was a dark brown sandy silty clay (1012), at least 1.05m deep. Above contexts 1012 and 1018 was a greenish brown silty clay (1013) containing fragments of tile and animal bone, up to 1.0m deep, becoming shallower to the east.

At the east end of the trench contexts 1011 and 1010 were cut by a vertical-sided flat based feature containing possible stone foundations (F102, Plate 2), 2.50m (52.72m AOD) below the modern ground surface. F102 was at least 3m wide and 1.40m deep, orientated northeast-southwest, extending beyond the east end of the trench. It was made of tightly packed limestone within a clay matrix (1003) containing sherds of Roman and medieval pottery, fragments of Roman tile, brick fragments and a piece of unworked flint.

Context 1003 was sealed by a layer of gravel and greenish grey sandy silt (1015), 0.20-0.55m deep, containing sherds of medieval pottery, clay pipe stem, brick and mortar fragments, animal bone and modern finds. Layer 1015 was sealed by a greenish brown silty clay (1014) containing lenses of sand and gravel. Layer 1014 was overlain by a layer of charcoal-rich silt (1007), 0.07m deep, containing sherds of medieval pottery, a fragment of brick or tile and a fragment of modern drainpipe. Partly overlying layer 1007 were two deposits, (1005 and 1006) filling slight shallow hollows. Deposit 1005 was a yellow mortar, 0.05 deep, containing post-medieval clay pipe, brick fragments, an iron nail and animal bone. Deposit 1006 was reddish brown clay silt, 0.10m deep, containing sherds of medieval pottery and fragments of modern tile.

Contexts 1005-1007, 1013, and the western part of 1010 were sealed by a dark brown or black silty sandy clay loam (1008), 0.80-2.20m deep, containing sherds of Roman and medieval pottery, fragments of post-medieval clay pipe stem, post-medieval brick and tile fragments, animal bone and post-medieval finds. A deposit of reddish brown clay (1006) within 1008 contained sherds of medieval pottery and possible modern tile.

Context 1008 was cut by a north-south orientated construction trench for a brick wall (F100), near the east end of the trench. This formed the foundations for the west wall of a structure of probable 19th century date. The north wall (F105) of this structure was visible in the south-facing section of the trench. A brick-built well (F101), 1.20m in diameter, also cut 1008. Due to safety reasons only the top of well F101was exposed and no further

machining took place at this part of the trench. Another construction trench for a north-south aligned brick wall (F104) cut layer 1008, at the west end of the trench. Overlying 1008, F100. F101 and F104 was a layer of brick rubble (1000) containing modern finds, which was sealed by crushed stone which forms the present yard surface.

Trench 2 (Fig. 5, Plate 4)

This trench was 4.30m long x 1.85m wide, was excavated to a depth of 3.10m (52.17m AOD) below the present tarmac yard surface and was aligned northwest-southeast. The natural subsoil was not revealed here, due to safety reasons. However information from a geotechnical borehole (borehole WS 3: BWB Environmental 2003) immediately adjacent to the north of the trench suggests the natural gravels are at a depth of 3.7m below the present tarmac yard surface.

The earliest context revealed was an organic black clay silt (2006) containing small flecks of fired clay (possibly brick or tile). Context 2006 was not fully excavated, but was at least 0.30m deep. Overlying context 2006 was a light greyish brown silty clay with lenses of greenish grey clay (2005), 1.40m deep, containing unworked flint, fragments of brick and tile, roof slate, mortar and animal bone. This was sealed by a dark brown or black silty sandy clay loam (2004), 0.60-0.95m deep, containing unworked flint, sherds of Roman, medieval and post-medieval pottery pottery, fragments of brick and tile, iron fragments, oyster shell and animal bone. Above 2004 was a cobbled surface (2003), 0.15m thick, which was present only in the eastern side of the trench. Cobbled surface 2003 and context 2004 were sealed by a layer of brick rubble, slate, mortar and sand (2002), 0.10-0.55m deep. . Layer 2002 was cut by a construction trench (F200) for a wall (2007) made of red brick of 19th century date. Layer 2002 and wall F200 were overlain by a cobbled surface (2001), 0.10m thick, and this was sealed by a layer of crushed stone capped by the present tarmac yard surface (2000), with a combined thickness of 0.25m.

7.0 Finds

7.1 *The pottery* by Annette Hancocks

Table 1: finds quantification and spot dates

Context/ feature	Description and quantification	Spot dating	LMARS type fabric
Tr. 1			
1003 (F102)	11x Roman ceramic tile (1098g), 1x modern ceramic brick (47g), 2x medieval pottery (10g), 3x Roman ceramics including 2 samian sherds (18g), 1x flint (6g) and 1x limestone (419g)	medieval (12^{th} – 13^{th} century AD) with residual 2^{nd} century AD Roman	Medieval: LY 1-5 Roman: SAM, GW
1004 (F103)	animal bone (168g), 3x 19^{th} century ceramic tile (246g), 2x mortar (58g), 2x iron nail (33g), 2x medieval pottery (26g)	19^{th} century AD with residual medieval	Medieval: LY 1-5
1005	animal bone (117g), 4x mortar (90g), 5x brick (45g), 1x iron nail (7g) and 1x post-medieval clay pipe bowl (15g)	18^{th} century AD	
1006	3x medieval pottery (55g) and 5x modern ceramic tile (18g)	modern tile? Intrusive 12^{th}/13^{th} century AD	Medieval: LY 1-5; IG
1007	1x modern ceramic brick/tile (17g), 1x ceramic drain (58g)and 4x medieval pottery including rim (58g)	modern material intrusive 12^{th} – 13^{th} century AD	Medieval: LY 1-5
1008	12x ceramic tile (414g), 2x modern drain pipe (102g), animal bone (60g), 4x modern vessel glass (21g), 4x medieval pottery (103g), 2x mortar (119g), 1x iron nail (10g), 3x clay pipe stem (6g) and 1x Roman greyware (GW, 16g)	modern 20^{th} century with residual late medieval	Medieval: LY 1-5 Roman: GW
1010	3x ceramic tile (209g) and 1x medieval pottery (21g)	12^{th}-13^{th} century AD	Medieval: LY 1-5
1013	1x ceramic tile (243g) and animal bone (40g)		
1015	10x modern ceramic brick (253g), 1x modern vessel glass (10g), 1x iron nail (49g), 3x medieval pottery including a stamped pottery handle (83g), 1x clay pipe stem (5g), 1x lino (1g), animal bone (21g), snail shell (<1g) and 1x mortar (<1g)	modern with residual 11^{th} – 12^{th} century AD	Medieval: LY 1-5
Tr.2			
2004	3x ceramic brick (39g), 1x post-medieval rim (184g), 5 x slate (473g); 1x iron mass (61g), 5x flint (105g), 1x ceramic tile (40g), 1x clay pipe stem (5g), 1x mortar (34g), animal bone (14g), 2x medieval pottery (40g), 1x oyster shell (2g), 1x Roman samian (23g) and 1x granite (264g)	18^{th} – 19^{th} century AD with residual 12^{th} – 13^{th} century AD	Medieval: LY 1-5 Roman: SAM
2005	5x ceramic tile (766g), animal bone (308g), 3x flint (94g), 4x mortar (374g), 2x roof slate (103g) and 4x ceramic brick (1853g);	modern 19^{th} – 20^{th} century AD	

The finds assemblage recovered is very mixed and there is a lot of contamination and/or residuality present amongst the eleven contexts containing finds. This has made interpretation difficult and should be borne in mind when considering the results. The finds were rapidly scanned, identified and quantified by count and weight (g). The results are presented in Table 1 above. Spot dates were assigned where possible. The major find type recovered was pottery of Romano-British and medieval date.

Roman pottery

A total of five residual sherds of Roman pottery of 2nd-4th century AD date were recognised. Two body sherds of samian (SAM) and a single greyware (GW) body sherd were recovered from F102 (1003). These were found in association with 11 fragments of Roman roof tile and later medieval material.

In addition, a single greyware (GW) body sherd was found with material of modern and medieval date, in layer 1008. A further body sherd of samian (SAM) was recovered from layer 2004, along with material of 18th-19th century date and some residual 12-13th century medieval pottery.

Medieval pottery

A small assemblage of medieval ceramics was recovered. This comprised 21 sherds (396g), with an average sherd weight of c. 19g. The high average sherd weight would seem to suggest that the medieval pottery may suggest the presence of a primary deposit or layer. It is likely that these deposits have subsequently been disturbed by later activity on site and would explain the occurrence of material of later date in some contexts. The majority of the medieval ceramics would appear to be of the Stanion Lyveden type ware tradition (LY in the Leicestershire medieval pottery type fabric series).

Table 2: Quantification of finds by type

Material Type	Quantity	Weight (g)
Ceramic: tile	23	1936
Ceramic: brick	19	2254
Ceramic: drain pipe	2	102
Ceramic: Roman tile	11	1098
Romano-British pottery	5	57
Medieval pottery	21	396
Post-medieval pottery	1	184
Clay pipe	6	31
Mortar	14	556
Iron	4	160
Glass: vessel	5	31
Animal bone		728
Oyster shell	1	2
Flint (unworked)	4	100
Stone tile: slate	2	103
Stone: miscellaneous	2	683

7.2 *The Animal Bone* by Emma Hancox

A small quantity of animal bone was recovered from the evaluation (728g). The material was fragmented and in fair/poor condition, with exfoliation of the outer layers in some contexts. Five contexts from Trench 1 and two from Trench 2 produced bone, 1004, 1005, 1008, 1013, 1015, 2004 and 2005. These contexts are either of post-medieval/

modern date or there is a high degree of contamination and/ or residuality from earlier and later contexts.

Five countable elements from Trench 1 and four from Trench 2 were noted. These were identified as sheep/goat, pig, bird (galliform) and cow. Butchery marks were recorded in two contexts (1004 and 1005), no evidence of pathology, burning or gnawing was noted.

Given its small size and the high degree of contamination, the assemblage is considered of low archaeological importance and no further work is recommended.

8.0 Discussion

The evidence from Trench 1 shows that river gravels (1017) are present at a depth of 3.55-4.25m below the current ground surface, becoming deeper further to the east. The river gravels were only exposed in two sondages at the east and west ends of Trench 1, due to safety reasons, and the natural was not reached in Trench 2.

Deposits or layers 1010, 1012, 1018, 1019 and 2006 may be alluvial deposits associated with the former course of the River Soar. Feature F103 may be a silted up channel within these alluvial deposits. The date of these deposits is uncertain due to the lack of finds and the high potential for residual and intrusive finds. However, an archaeological evaluation carried out by University of Leicester Archaeological Services immediately to the south of the site at the former Merlin Works revealed evidence of a possible medieval river channel (pers. comm. J. Meek) and the deposits encountered here could be part of a sequence of similar date. Information obtained during the auger survey also suggests alluvial deposits are present, overlying river gravels at other parts of the site.

Stone foundations 1003 in Trench 1, lying within steep-sided cut F102, situated 2.5m below the modern ground surface, may be interpreted as the remains of wall foundations, a platform or perhaps a riverside revetment. The stone foundations 1003 may be of Roman or of medieval date. The finds recovered might suggest the stone foundations could be of Roman date with intrusive medieval pottery, possibly introduced by robbing activity which may have cut through alluvial deposits, laid down earlier in the medieval period. It is possible that the stone foundations may be associated with the town defences. Recent excavations to the south of the site have revealed possible evidence of the western town defences in the form of a cut 3-4m wide containing stone rubble with some evidence of robber material (pers. comm. J. Meek). In places the defensive wall and foundations survived. F102 cuts layer 1010, which could possibly be of medieval date, although there is not enough dating evidence to be certain. If this were the case the robbing activity may be responsible for the cut F102, which appears to be cut through alluvial deposits, perhaps laid down earlier in the medieval period. A similar feature has been exposed to the south of the site during archaeological evaluation being carried out by University of Leicester Archaeological Services. Layers 1008, Trench 1 and 2004/2005, Trench 2 may be the result of cultivation on site or, more likely, the dumping of material to reclaim areas of the site to build upon in the post-medieval period. The

foundations for brick structures F100, F104 and well F101 are probably associated with the industrial use of the site in the late 18th and 19th century and can be related to buildings shown on early OS maps.

The results of the evaluation suggest that archaeological features and deposits dating to the Roman and/ or medieval periods are more likely to be present at the eastern part of the site, close to the Bath Lane frontage. Other parts of the site may have been wet, low-lying and prone to flooding and consequently not occupied before the post-medieval period. A river channel may have occupied the majority of the site during the medieval and early post-medieval period. Other parts of the site may have been wet, marshy, low-lying and prone to flooding and consequently not occupied before the post-medieval period. However, only a small part of the site has been sampled by means of trial-trenching, due to the presence of factory buildings. It is not possible to draw firm conclusions concerning the likely presence of archaeological features and deposits over the rest of the site without further trial-trenching. Therefore the conclusions drawn here about the rest of the site can only be tentative, at present.

9.0 Acknowledgements

The evaluation was supervised by Josh Williams with the assistance of Richard Cherrington and Paul Harris. The auger survey was monitored by Richard Cuttler and Josh Williams. This report was written by Laurence Jones who also managed the project on behalf of Birmingham Archaeology. Thanks are due to Simon Mortimer who monitored the site on behalf of John Samuels Archaeological Consultants and to Richard Clark, City Archaeologist, Leicester City Museum Service. Thanks are also due to James Meek and Anthony Gnanaratnam of University of Leicester Archaeological Services.

10.0 References

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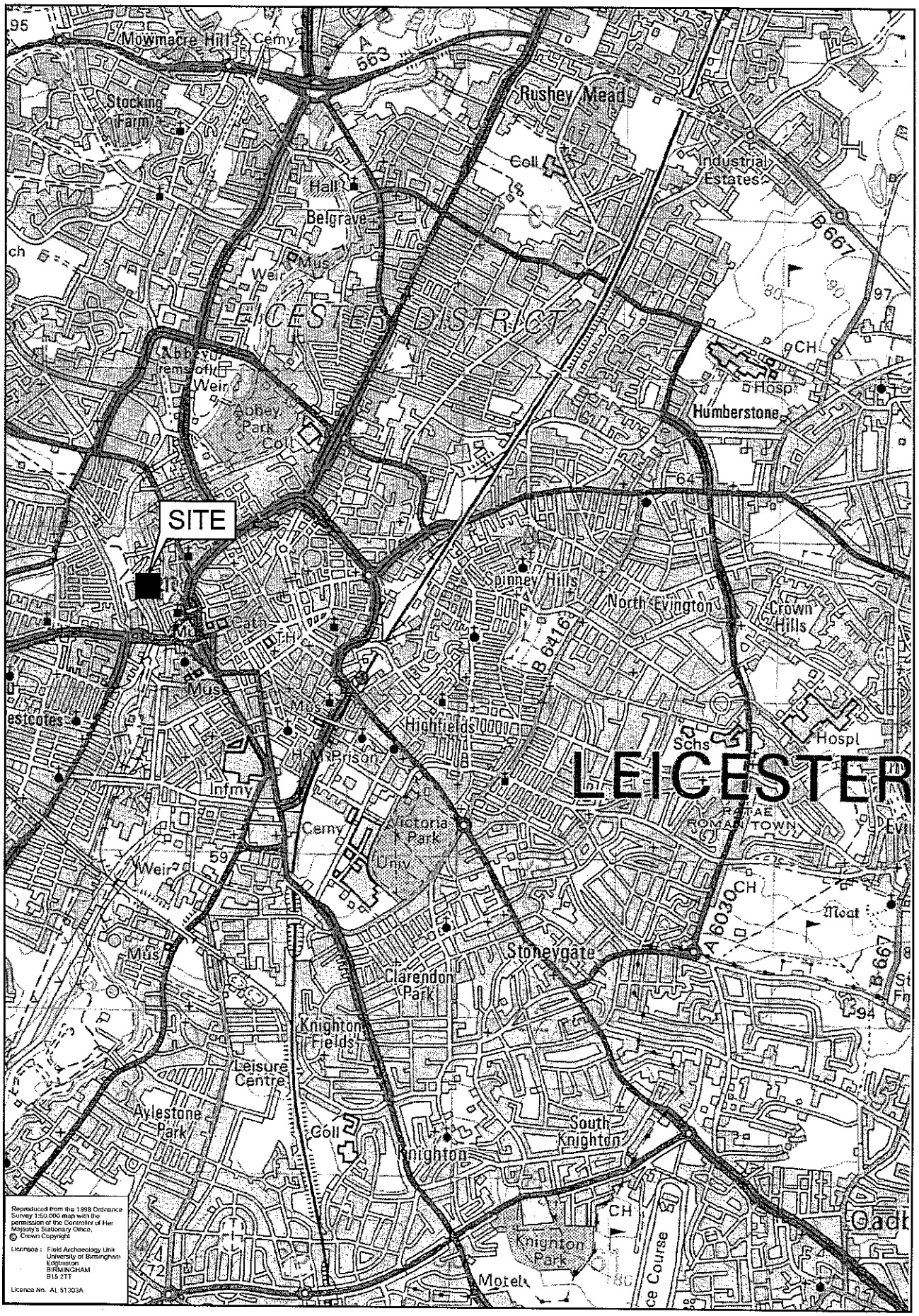
SITE
LEICESTER
Mowmacre Hill
Cemy
Stocking Farm
Rushey Mead
Industrial Estates
Belgrave
Hall
Coll
Weir
Mus
LEICESTER DISTRICT
Abbey Park
Remains of
Humberstone
Hospl
Spinney Hills
North Evington
Crown Hills
Highfields
Schs
Prison
Infmy
Victoria Park
Univ
Stoneygate
Clarendon Park
Knighton Fields
Leisure Centre
Aylestone Park
South Knighton
Knighton
Knighton Park
Golf Course
Motel
Moat
ROMAN TOWN
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Licence No. AL 51303A

Fig.1

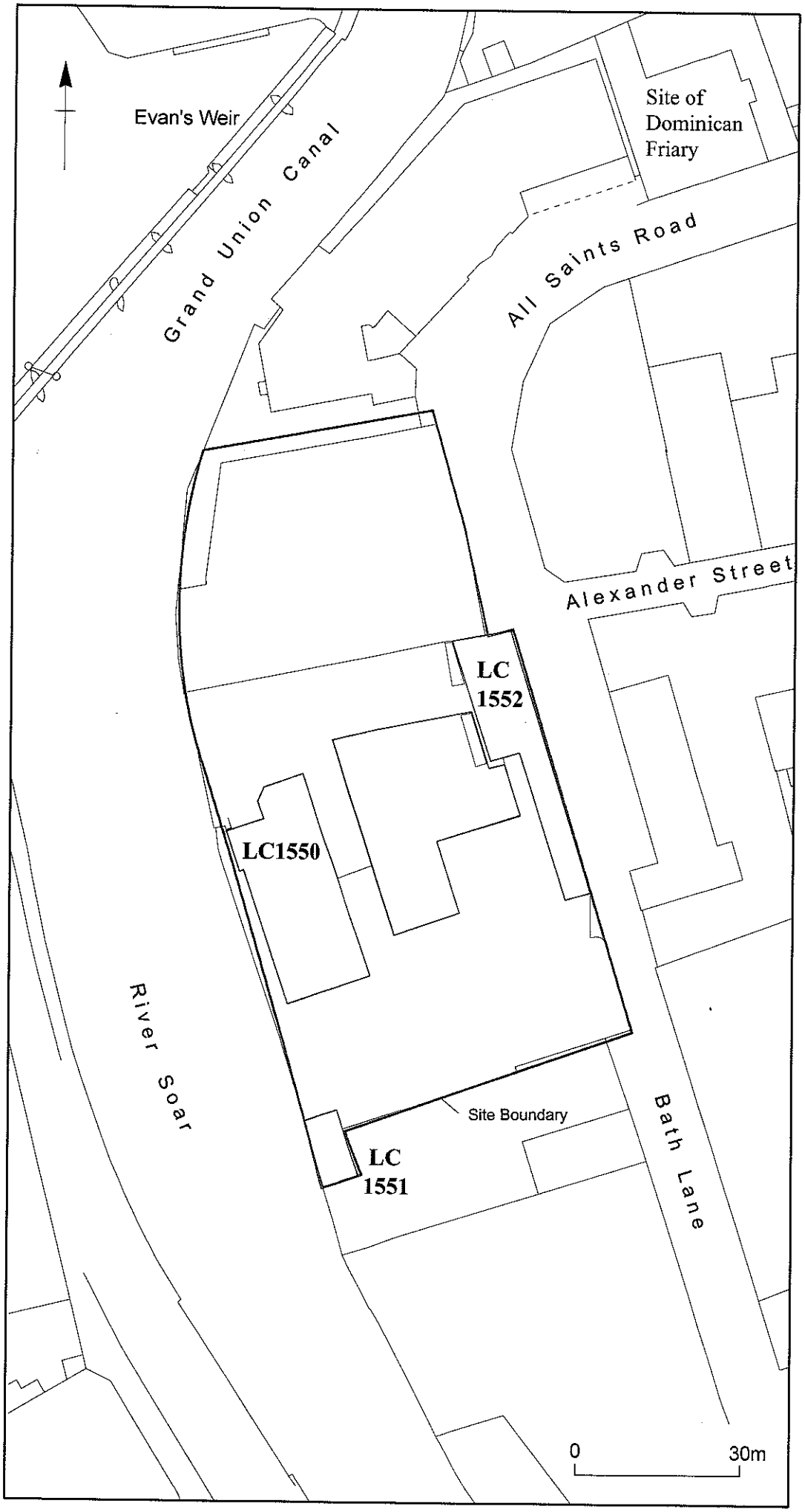
Evan's Weir
Grand Union Canal
Site of Dominican Friary
All Saints Road
Alexander Street
LC 1552
LC1550
River Soar
Site Boundary
LC 1551
Bath Lane
0
30m

Fig.2

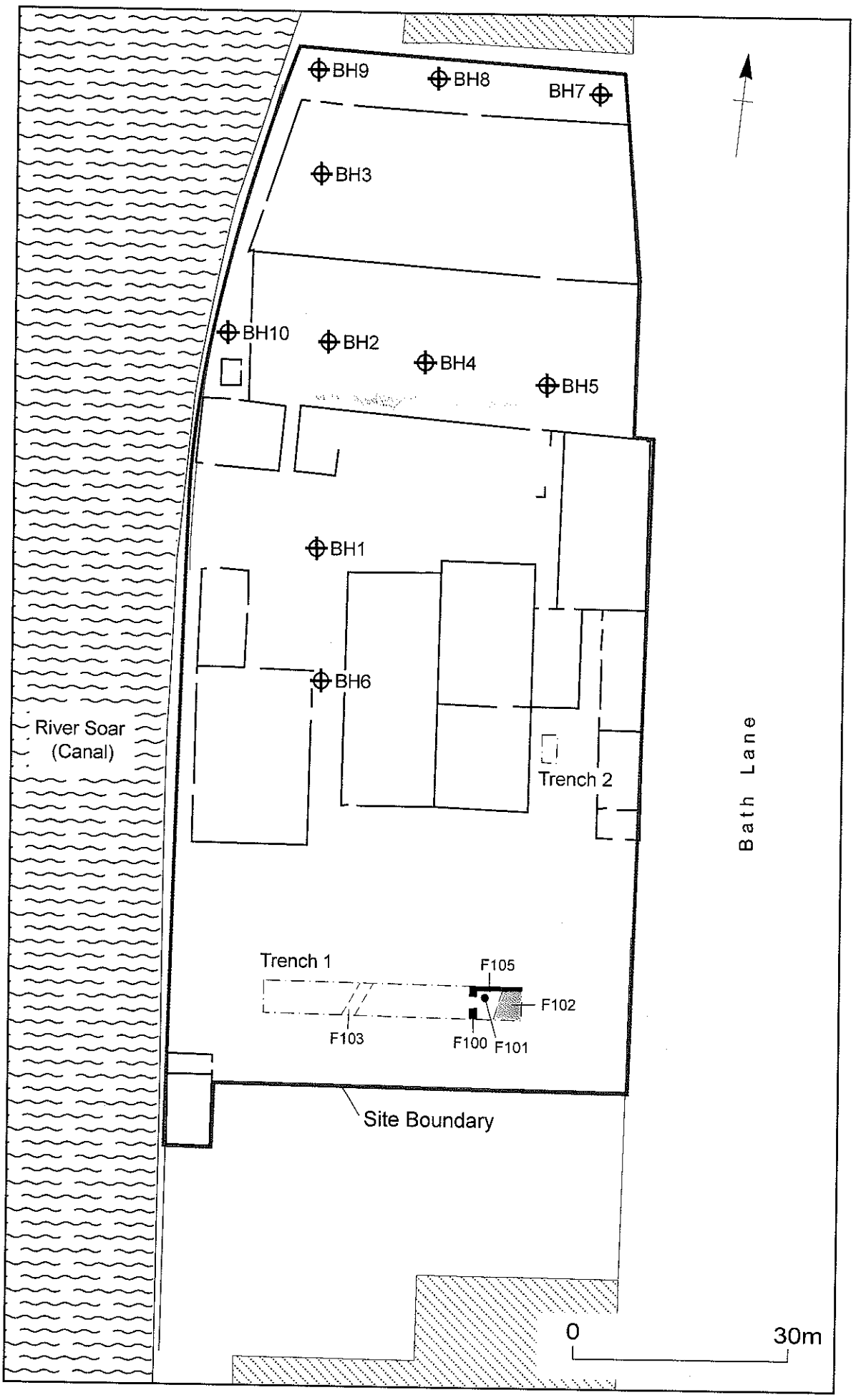
BH9
BH8
BH7
BH3
BH10
BH2
BH4
BH5
BH1
BH6
River Soar
(Canal)
Trench 2
Bath Lane
Trench 1
F105
F102
F103
F100
F101
Site Boundary
0
30m

Fig.3

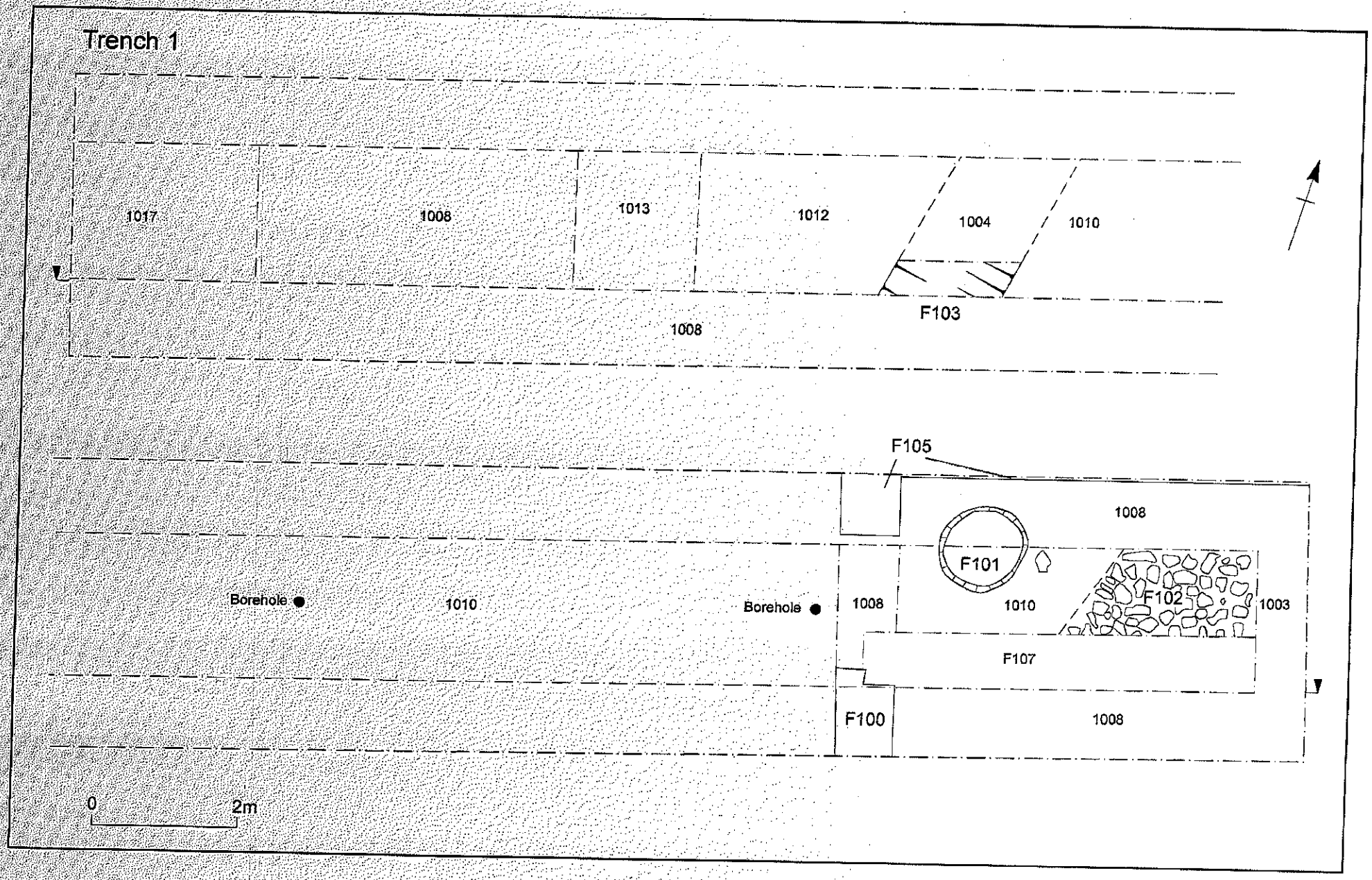
Trench 1
1017
1008
1013
1012
1004
1010
F103
1008
F105
1008
F101
Borehole
1010
Borehole
1008
1010
F102
1003
F107
F100
1008
0
2m

Fig.4

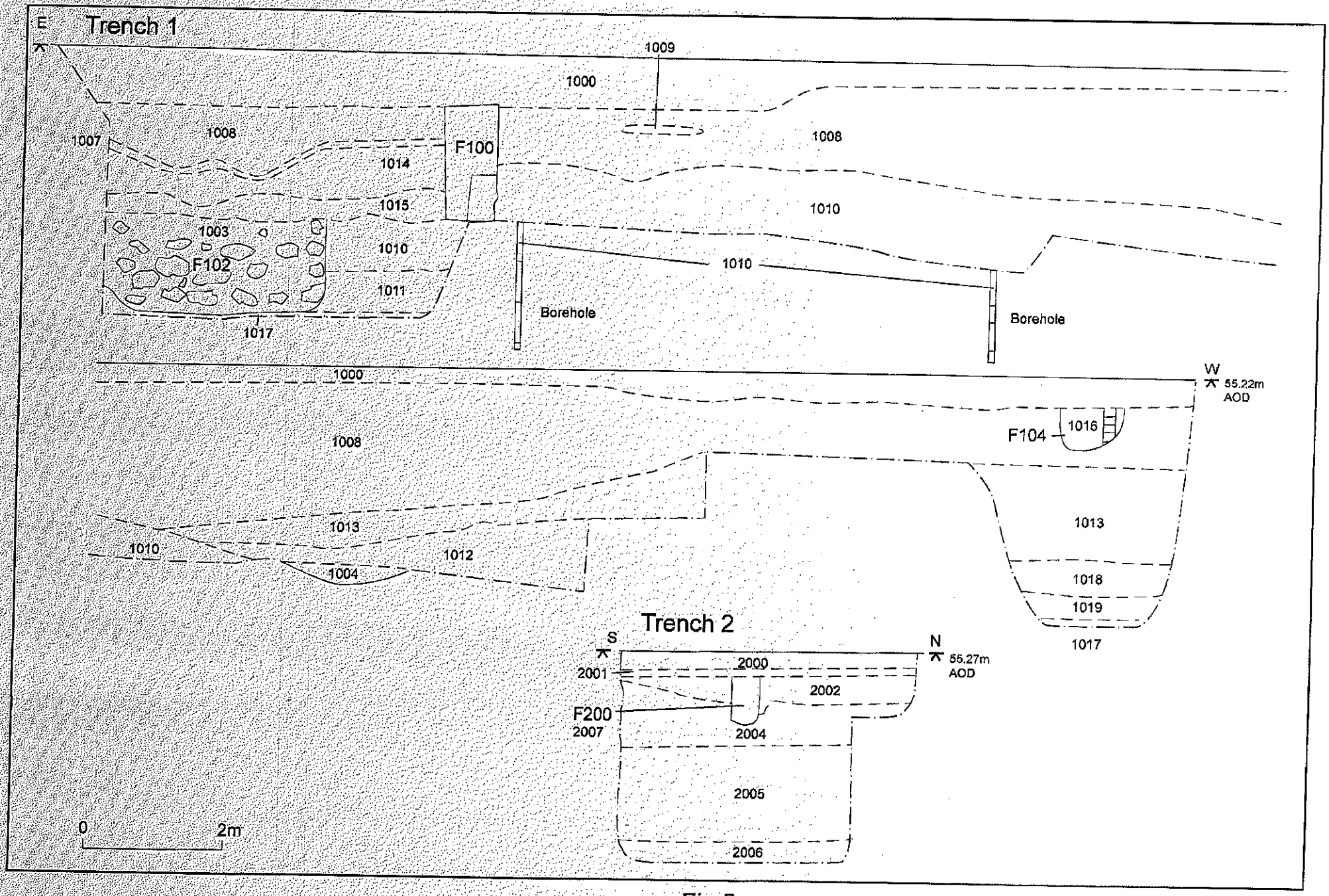
Trench 1
E
1009
1000
1007
1008
F100
1014
1015
1008
1010
1003
1010
F102
1010
1011
1017
Borehole
Borehole
1000
W
55.22m
AOD
F104
1016
1008
1013
1010
1013
1012
1004
1018
1019
1017
Trench 2
S
N
55.27m
AOD
2001
2000
2002
F200
2007
2004
2005
2006
0
2m

Fig.5

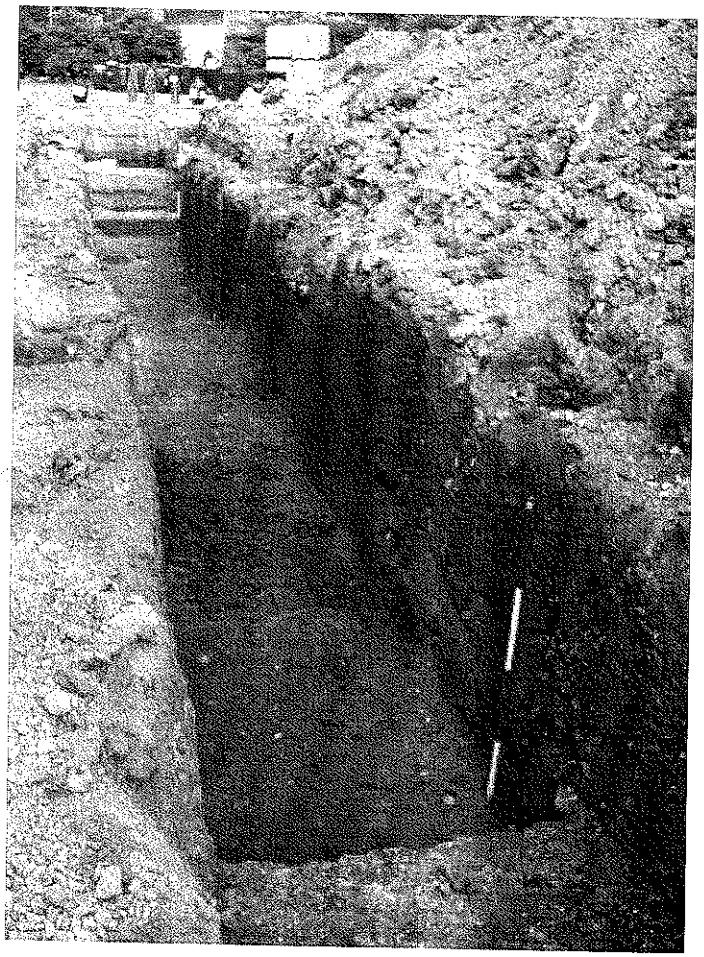

Plate 1

Plate 2

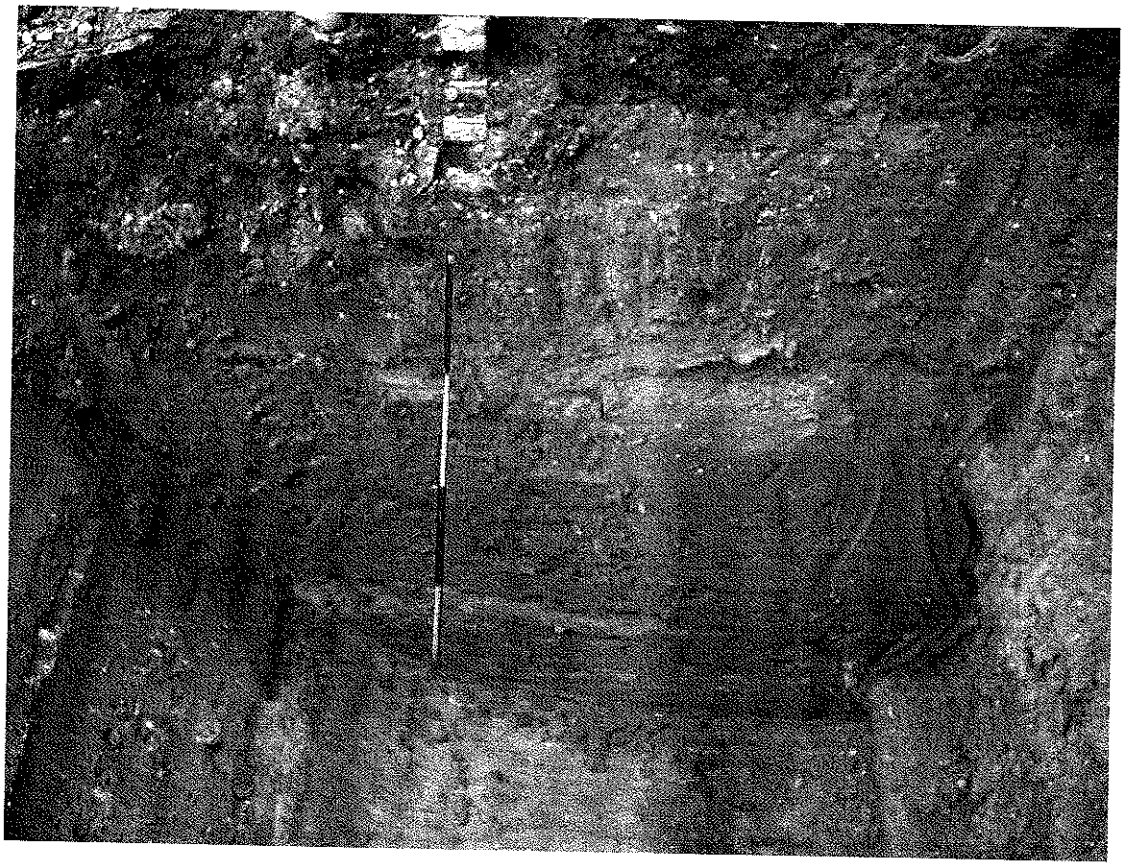

Plate 3

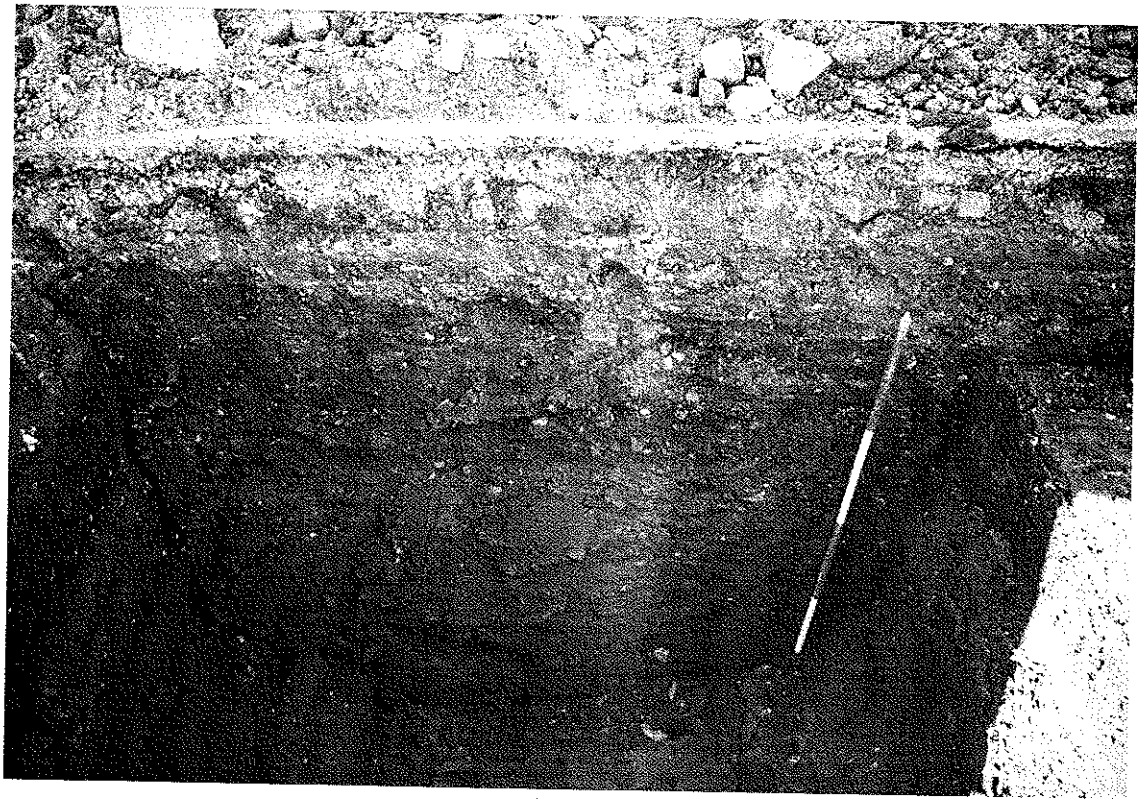

Plate 4