

**Coventry and Warwickshire
Hospital, Stoney Stanton Road,
Coventry, Warwickshire: An
Archaeological Watching Brief
2004**

Project No. 1144
March 2004

**Coventry and Warwickshire Hospital, Stoney Stanton Road,
Coventry, Warwickshire:
An Archaeological Watching Brief 2004**

by
John Halsted & Mark Hewson

For further information please contact:
Birmingham Archaeology
The University of Birmingham
Edgbaston
Birmingham B15 2TT
Tel: 0121 414 5513
Fax: 0121 414 5516
E-Mail: bham-arch@bham.ac.uk
Web Address: <http://www.barch.bham.ac.uk/bufau>

**COVENTRY AND WARWICKSHIRE HOSPITAL, STONEY STANTON ROAD,
COVENTRY, WARWICKSHIRE:
AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF 2004**

Contents

	<i>Summary</i>	1
1.0	Introduction	1
2.0	Site location	1
3.0	Archaeological background	1
4.0	Aims	2
5.0	Methodology	2
6.0	Results	2
7.0	Discussion	3
8.0	Acknowledgements	4
9.0	Bibliography	4

Figures

1	Site location
2	Coventry & Warwickshire Hospital
3	Pile holes and trenches

Coventry and Warwickshire Hospital, Stoney Stanton Road, Coventry, Warwickshire: An Archaeological Watching Brief 2003

SUMMARY

During December 2003 Birmingham Archaeology was contracted by Interserve Building to undertake an archaeological watching brief in a surface car park located at the junction of Stoney Stanton Road and Byron Street; the property of Coventry and Warwickshire Hospital (NGR SP 3373 7968). This was a requirement of the Coventry City Council Development Directorate, resulting from a proposal for the development of the site as a new mental health wing of the hospital. The archaeological work was informed by a brief prepared by the City Development Directorate (Coventry City Council, 2003), and was guided by the Standards and Guidance for an archaeological watching brief laid down by the Institute of Field Archaeologists (IFA 1999). There was a potential for the discovery of remains of medieval pottery kilns and associated features given the location of the site. However, with the exception of a brick cellar, which was most likely to have been associated with dwellings fronting onto Stoney Stanton Road, little of archaeological significance was observed.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

This short report outlines the results of a watching brief carried out during the initial site-strip of a car park at NGR SP 3373 7968 in order to observe any exposure of the natural geology and during groundworks. This archaeological watching brief took place as a condition of the City of Coventry's planning process and is detailed in the site-specific brief (Soden 2003a). The work was commissioned by Mike Sibson of Interserve Building and carried out by Birmingham Archaeology.

2.0 SITE LOCATION (Fig. 1)

The site occupies an important location within one of Coventry's suburbs (Fig. 2). Currently a surface car park, it lies on the Stoney Stanton Road, north of Swanswell Pool.

Most of Coventry, including this particular area, lies on Keuper Marl, stiff red clay of the Triassic Enville Beds. This overlies distinctive coarse-grained red sandstone, which in turn seals Carboniferous coal seams.

3.0 ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

Cartographic evidence from the 17th century onwards shows the site as open ground until the 1st Edition OS Map (1888), where depictions of buildings fronting onto Stoney Stanton Road can be seen. During the Second World War the hospital site was bombed.

Whilst the site lies outside the limits of the medieval town of Coventry the site incorporates part of the late medieval fields of the manor of Harnall. Research has identified this location as a potential centre of pottery manufacture during the 12th and 13th centuries AD and the area is known as Potters Harnall from the 14th century onwards (Soden 2003b). The manor became the central holding of the Hospital of St John the Baptist, a cell of St Mary's Benedictine Priory. While the Priory cartulary mentions this manor many times, the documents never throw any light upon the "Potters" prefix. An estate map of 1800 (Coventry Archives CA 244/31/2), depicts the site before development as containing the unculverted course of the Springfield Brook and the mid-16th century piped water conduit from the Springfield headwaters at Harnall Lane, both crossing the site's western end (Fig. 2). As a result, in terms of potential archaeological impact, the site offered the following. A potential for the remains of medieval pottery kilns and associated features, the Springfield Brook, 16th century piped water conduit and 19th century buildings and gardens.

4.0 AIMS

The aim of the watching brief and contingency excavation was to locate, record and excavate any medieval and or early post-medieval remains related to the supposed pottery industry of Potters Harnall. This was achieved through observation of groundworks by a suitably qualified archaeologist, recording any surviving structures, their location, nature, depth of burial, thickness and any dating information obtained during the process.

5.0 METHODOLOGY

Parts of the area of the car park were stripped of the tarmac surface using a 360° mechanical excavator, using a toothless ditching bucket. Subsequent to this a series of pile holes were dug for pilings whilst under the supervision of a qualified archaeologist. Throughout the groundworks archaeological monitoring ensured that in the event of the exposure of archaeological features, all such features were hand-cleaned, excavated and recorded. In the event that a potential for palaeoenvironmental evidence was found, 20 litre samples would be collected from suitable features. A full record was made of the stratigraphic sequence using pro-forma context and feature record cards. This record was supplemented by scale drawings where appropriate. All records, along with colour print photographs, form the site archive, and are currently stored at the offices of Birmingham Archaeology.

In the event that any kilns were discovered there was a contingency for reactive fieldwork to record and excavate one or more pottery kilns, related waster dumps and waste pits if present, subsequent to discussion with the Planning Archaeologist.

6.0 RESULTS

During the excavation of pile holes parallel to Stoney Stanton Road a brick cellar structure was encountered. The cellar measured 8.2m in length by 4.4m width and

was 1.7m deep. It was built from orange brick c.9¼" x 4¼" x 3 ¼". The cellar was orientated at 90 degrees to Stoney Stanton Lane and in all likelihood reflects the location of the 19th / 20th century houses which were located along the line of this road.

The section exposed during the excavation of the cellar revealed that c.1.0m of stiff pinkish clay overlay a deposit of dark grey organic silt. One sherd of post-medieval pottery was recovered from this context demonstrating a possible phase of re-deposition or levelling. A 10 litre sample of this material was taken, though in the light of potential post-medieval re-deposition it was considered of low potential and was not processed.

A sondage was excavated to the northeast of the cellar in order to test for the presence of further cellars in this area of the site. This was excavated to a depth of 1.5m and revealed a dark grey silt horizon similar to that recorded to its south, overlain by hardcore and brick rubble. No archaeological features or artefacts were observed.

Six other pile hole features were observed on the site (Fig. 3). Each trench measured c.2.0 x 2.0m in plan and had been excavated to a depth of between 0.7-0.8m. P.H. 1 comprised the area of the brick cellar described above. PH.2 cut through tarmac to a depth of 0.15m, which overlay hardcore and pinkish clay to c.0.35m, brick rubble to c.0.55m, and finally the dark grey silt horizon. P.H.3 was a larger trench (Fig. 3) c.11.0m x 4.0m, which cut through tarmac, brick rubble and stiff pinkish clay. In this trench fragmentary brick walls were recorded also orientated at 90 degrees to Stoney Stanton Road. P.H 4 was also cut through tarmac, silty clay with brick rubble, and the same deposit of pinkish clay. This also proved to be the case in trenches PH5, PH6 and PH7.

Whilst there had been a potential opportunity for the discovery of kilns in this location none were in fact observed, nor was there any evidence of kiln detritus.

7.0 DISCUSSION

Natural geology was not reached in any of the exposures. The earliest deposits comprised a dark grey organic silt horizon, which was exposed in pile holes 1 and 2. The solitary post-medieval sherd recovered from this horizon indicates that it may be the result of a re-deposition event rather than a natural alluvial deposit. This is not clear though and remains conjectural. A layer of pinkish clay overlay the organic silt deposit. It was exposed in all pile holes and is interpreted as an artificial levelling layer and whilst no artefacts were recovered it is in all likelihood of post-medieval origin. The subsequent layers are associated with the levelling required to create the car park.

The method of groundwork employed during this watching brief limited the opportunity for exposing *in-situ* archaeology. Accordingly, whilst little was recovered of archaeological significance it remains the case that potential for the future discovery of elements of the Potters Harnell pottery manufacturing industry cannot yet be discounted.

8.0 ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

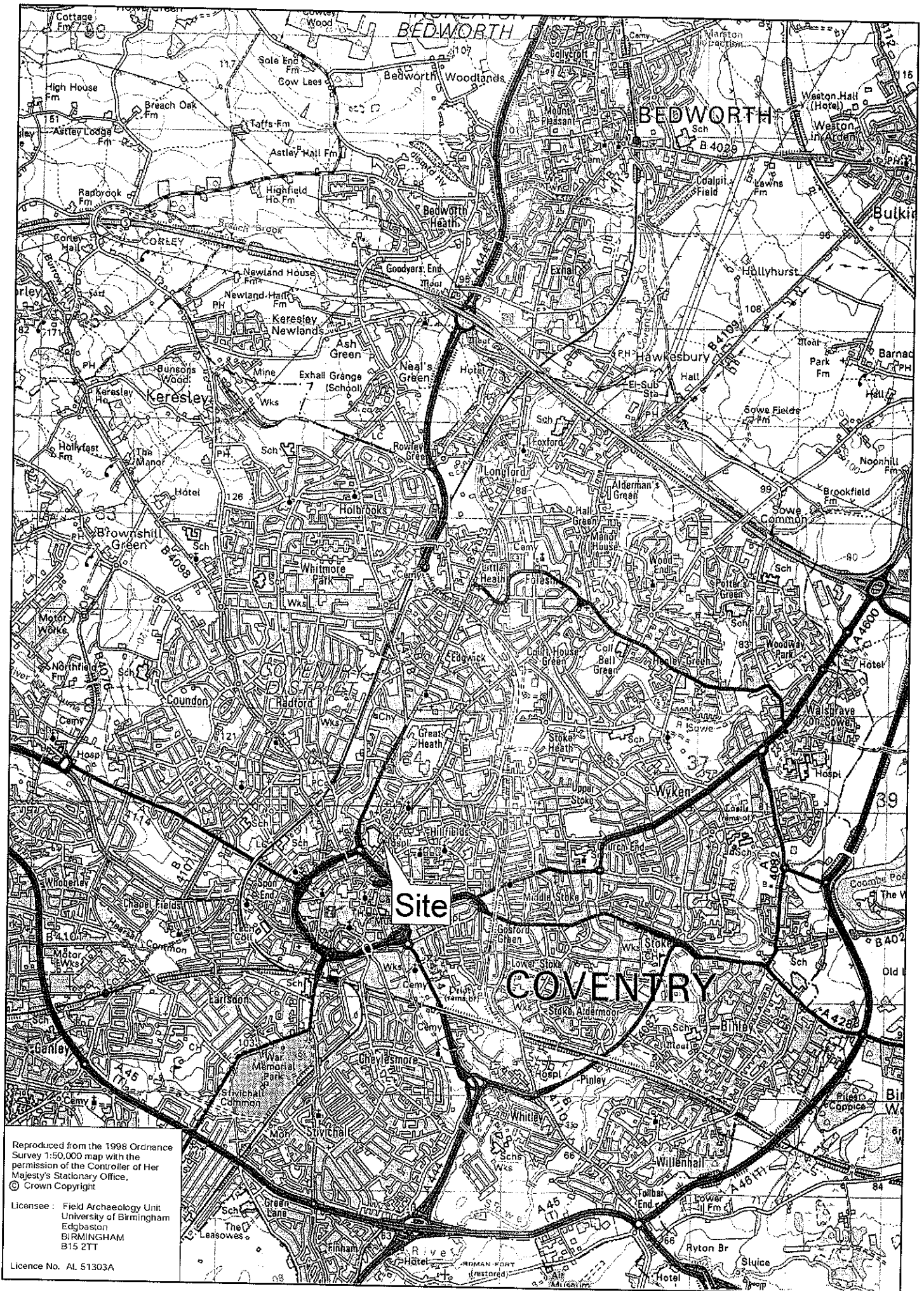
John Halsted carried out the watching brief, prepared the illustrations and with Mark Hewson also wrote the report. Steve Litherland managed the project and edited this report. Thanks are due to Mick Cahill and Mike Sibson of Interserve Building and to Ian Soden, Planning Archaeologist for Coventry City Council.

8.0 BIBLIOGRAPHY

IFA 1999 *Standards and Guidance for Archaeological Field Evaluation*. Institute of Field Archaeologists. (Revised 2001)

Soden, I. 2003a, *Brief for Archaeological Watching Brief with Contingency: Part B (Site-specific, City Centre Environs)*, City Development Directorate, Coventry

Soden, I. 2003b, *Brief for Archaeological Set-Piece Excavation: Part A (Generic Suburbs)*, City Development Directorate, Coventry



Reproduced from the 1998 Ordnance Survey 1:50,000 map with the permission of the Controller of Her Majesty's Stationary Office, © Crown Copyright
 Licensee: Field Archaeology Unit, University of Birmingham, Edgbaston, BIRMINGHAM, B15 2TT
 Licence No. AL 51303A

Fig.1

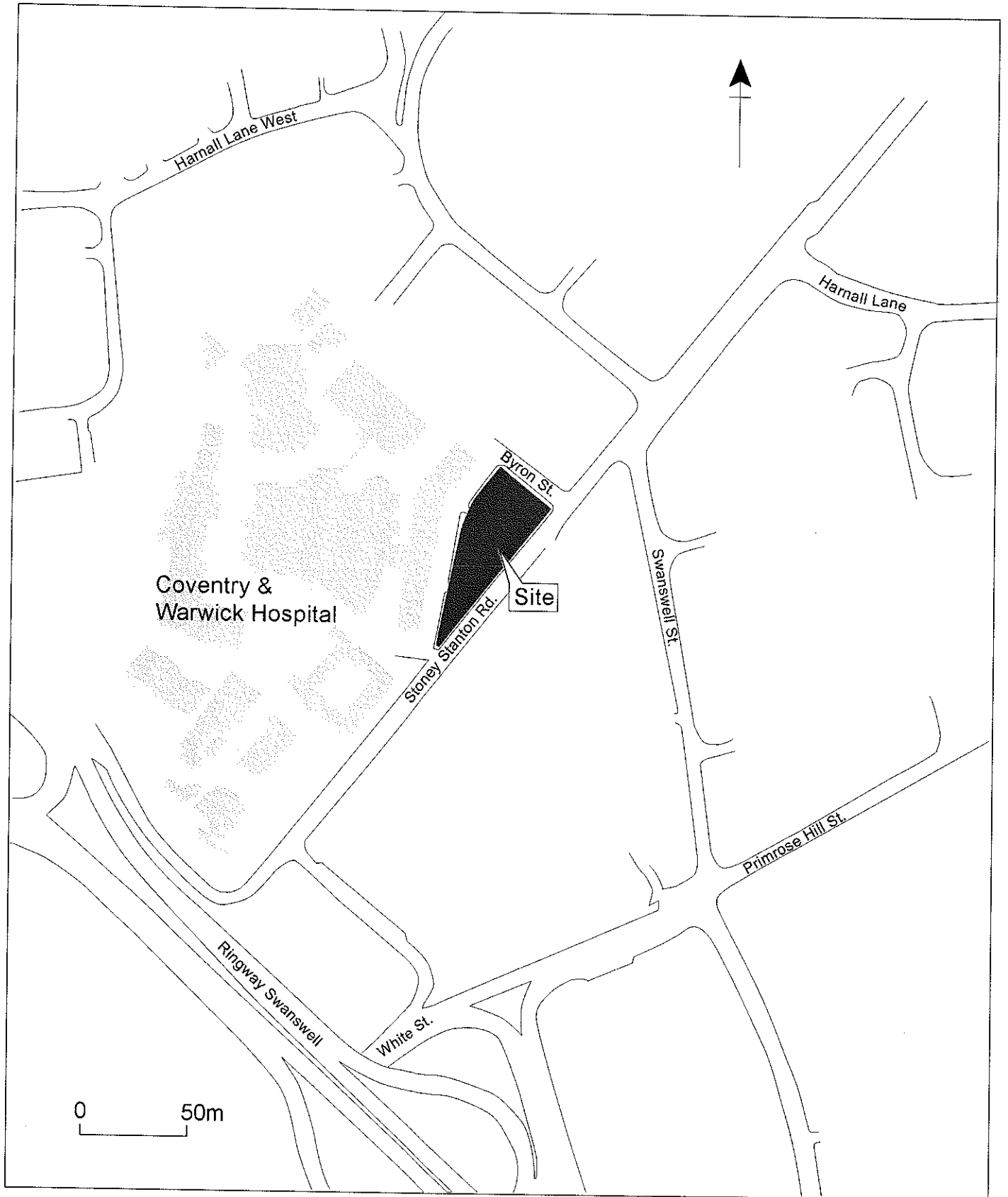
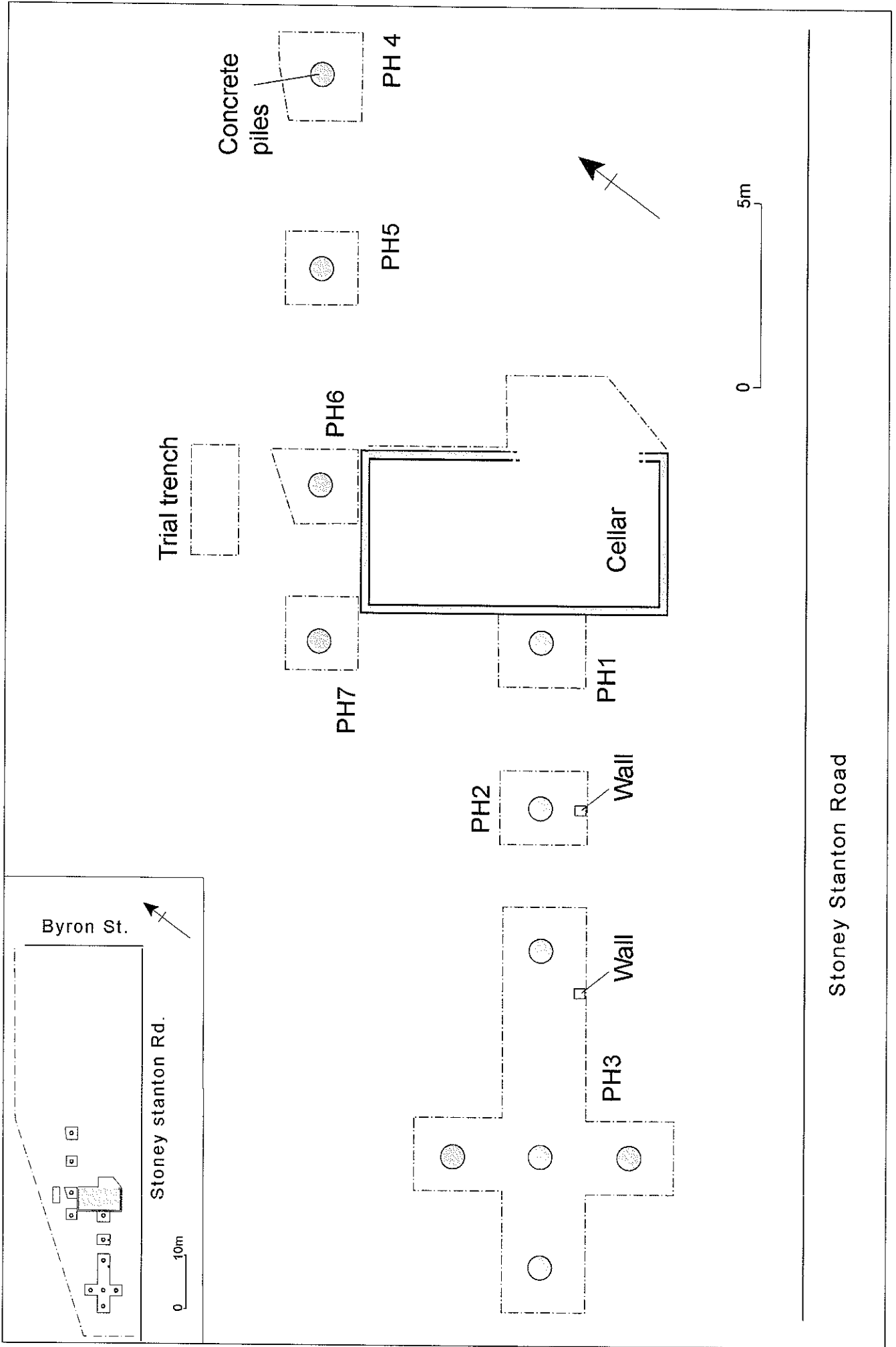


Fig.2



Stoney Stanton Road

Fig.3