

**MOLINEUX HOTEL,  
WOLVERHAMPTON:  
AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL  
WATCHING BRIEF, 2006**

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May 2006

Project No. 1394

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### **APPENDIX**

*Molineux Hotel, Wolverhampton. Archaeological Watching Brief.*  
(Removed)

**SUMMARY**

*An archaeological watching brief was carried out at the site of Molineux Hotel, Wolverhampton (NGR SO 9126 9898), an 18<sup>th</sup> century Grade II\* listed building, in February and March 2006. The work was undertaken by Birmingham Archaeology on behalf of Wolverhampton City Council. The watching brief was required by the Black Country Archaeologist, during a programme of extensive restoration of the 18<sup>th</sup> century house. It was thought that there was some potential for the survival of archaeological features and artefacts, which may have pre-dated the building of the house and of deposits connected with the house or its gardens.*

*No significant archaeological features, deposits or finds were recorded during the watching brief. It is likely that the construction in the 19<sup>th</sup> century of a terrace of four houses and associated cellars may have removed any potential evidence of earlier activity. Parts of the infilled cellars were recorded and in one cellar an in situ cast iron water-boiling cauldron survived on its brick platform.*

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**1 INTRODUCTION**

Birmingham Archaeology was commissioned by Wolverhampton City Council to undertake an archaeological watching brief during a programme of extensive restoration at the former Molineux Hotel, Wolverhampton, hereafter referred to as the site.

The watching brief was undertaken in February and March of 2006 and follows guidelines laid down in the Institute of Field Archaeologists *Standards and Guidance for Archaeological Watching Briefs* (IFA 1994) and is in accordance with Planning Policy Guidance Note 16 (DoE 1990). It conforms to a brief written by the Black Country Archaeologist, Wolverhampton City Council (see Appendix), and a written scheme of investigation by Birmingham Archaeology (Birmingham Archaeology 2005), approved by the Black Country Archaeologist, prior to implementation.

**2 SITE LOCATION AND DESCRIPTION**

The site is located on the northwestern edge of central Wolverhampton on the periphery of the modern ring road (NGR SO 9126 9898) and immediately south of the Wolverhampton Wanderers football stadium (Fig. 1). The Molineux Hotel is a large brick-built Georgian property formerly known as Molineux House, which dates to the early-mid 18<sup>th</sup> century and was augmented and extended throughout that century (SMR No. 483). The hotel building is currently undergoing a programme of extensive restoration including the upgrade of drainage. The watching brief focused only on the groundworks associated with the modification of mains services to the front of the building up to the boundary of the site. The natural topography has been heavily modified in recent years by the construction of the ring road, on the southern boundary of the site. The demolition of a terrace of houses once adjacent to Molineux Hotel on its southeastern side, is also associated with the development of the road (Fig. 2).

**3 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES**

The general aim of the evaluation was to determine the character, state of preservation and the potential significance of any buried remains.

Specific aims were to:

- To monitor all groundworks, specifically the excavation of service trenches for drainage.
- 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/ ecofactual material recovered from the site.

These aims were achieved through a programme of archaeological monitoring visits to the site during groundworks.

#### **4 METHODOLOGY**

Groundworks comprised the machine stripping of overburden with a mini-digger fitted with a toothless bucket. This was monitored by a suitably qualified archaeologist and complemented with the salvage recording of any archaeological deposits and features revealed during works.

All stratigraphic sequences were recorded, even where no archaeology was present. Features were planned, and sections were drawn through all cut features and significant vertical stratigraphy. A comprehensive written record was maintained using a continuous numbered context system on *pro-forma* context and feature cards. Photographs supplemented written records and scale plans.

Recovered finds were cleaned, marked and remedial conservation work was undertaken as necessary. Treatment of all finds conformed to guidance contained within 'A strategy for the care and investigation of finds' published by English Heritage.

The full site archive includes all artefactual remains recovered from the site. 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). Finds and the paper archive will be deposited with the appropriate repository subject to permission from the landowner.

#### **5 ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL CONTEXT**

The house now a Grade II\* listed building, belonged to the Molineux family between 1754 and 1860 and was one of the grandest houses in Wolverhampton. Subsequently it was the centrepiece of short-lived pleasure gardens and sports grounds until the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Wolverhampton Wanderers FC acquired most of the grounds in 1889 and their stadium has occupied the site of the former gardens since then. The house became a hotel and public house until 1979 when it was closed down. In 2003 a fire severely damaged much of the interior and the roof. From 2004 to the present, Wolverhampton City Council has been undertaking a programme of refurbishment and restoration.

## 6 RESULTS

Groundworks comprised the excavation by mini-digger of a trench for the laying of drainage pipes, which ran from the southeast elevation of the building for 6.0m before returning to run east a further 20.0m to the site boundary. The trench was between 1.1m - 1.4m deep and cut natural soft red sand [1000] at its deepest extent, nearest the building (Fig. 4). Natural 1000 was overlain by a layer of brick rubble debris [1001], which was cut by several modern drains aligned northeast - southwest. The remains of brick cellar walls and a cast iron cauldron, resting on its brick base, were also revealed (Plates 1-4).

## 7 DISCUSSION

No evidence of significant archaeological features, which pre-dated the construction of the Molineux Hotel was recorded. With the exception of the surviving elements of cellars associated with the formerly adjacent 19<sup>th</sup> century terrace, no significant artefacts or archaeological features were recorded. Layer 1001 derived from the demolition of the short terrace of houses, which had originally been situated adjacent to the Molineux Hotel, on its northeastern side (Fig. 3). These 19<sup>th</sup> century houses had originally fronted onto North Street and were demolished to make way for the current ring road.

## 8 ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Regeneration and Transportation Department of Wolverhampton City Council commissioned the project. Thanks are due to Phil Priest of Sapcotes Ltd for all liaison and support on site and for his co-operation and assistance throughout the project. Thanks also to Mike Shaw, the Black Country Archaeologist who monitored the project. Kate Bain and Mark Hewson undertook the fieldwork. The written report was produced by Mark Hewson, illustrated by Nigel Dodds and edited by Laurence Jones who also monitored the project for Birmingham Archaeology.

## 9 REFERENCES

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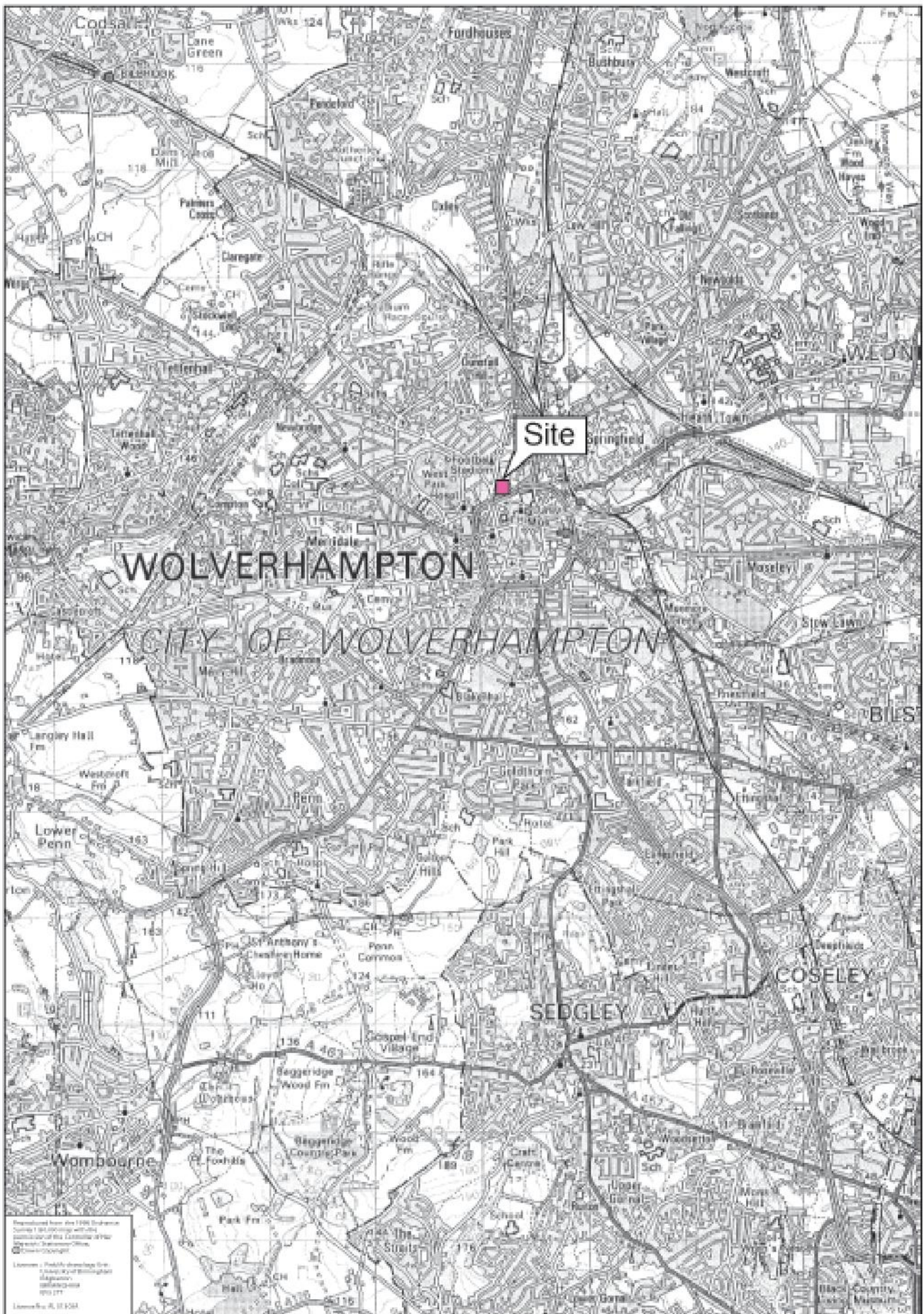


Fig.1



1902

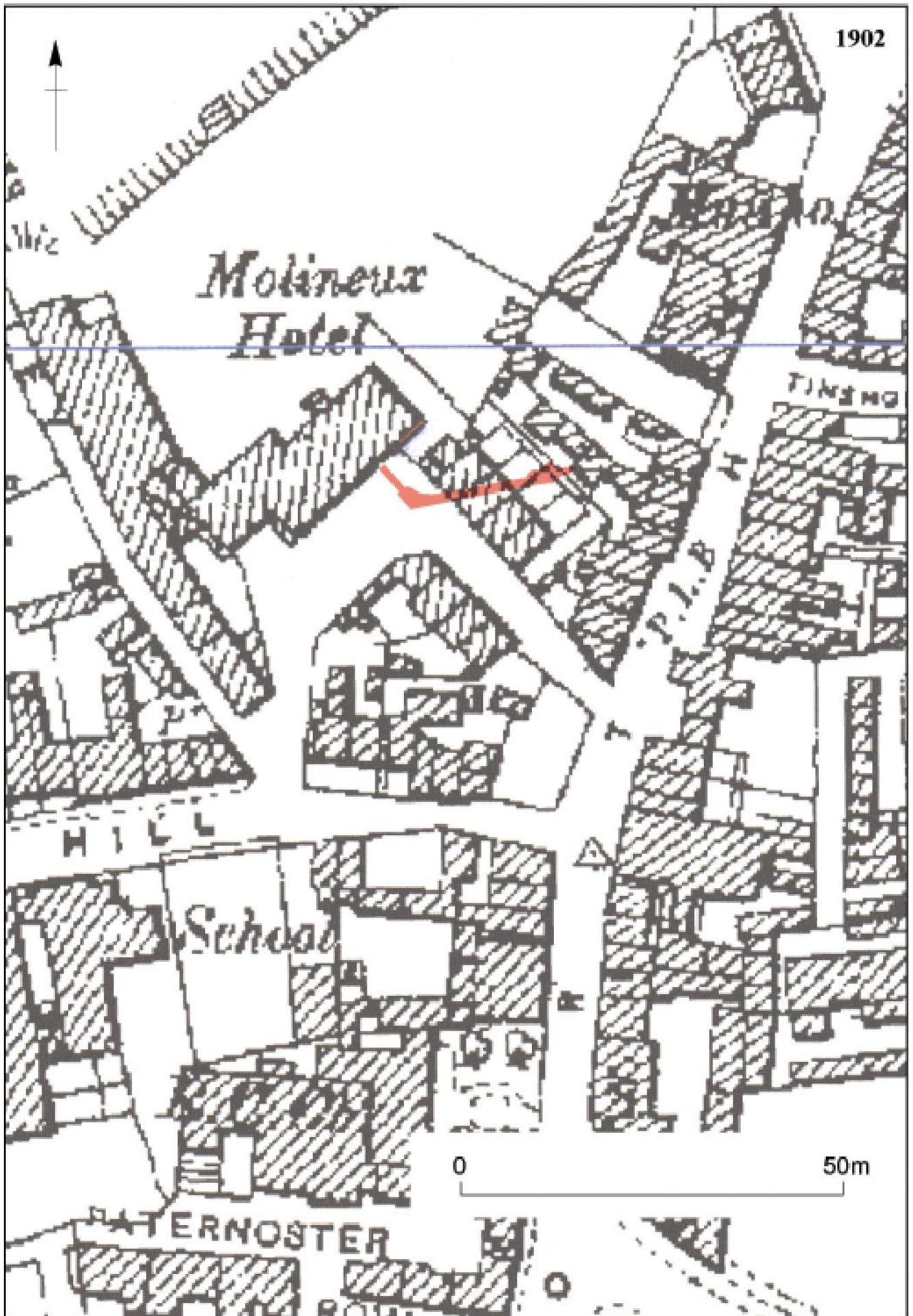


Fig.3

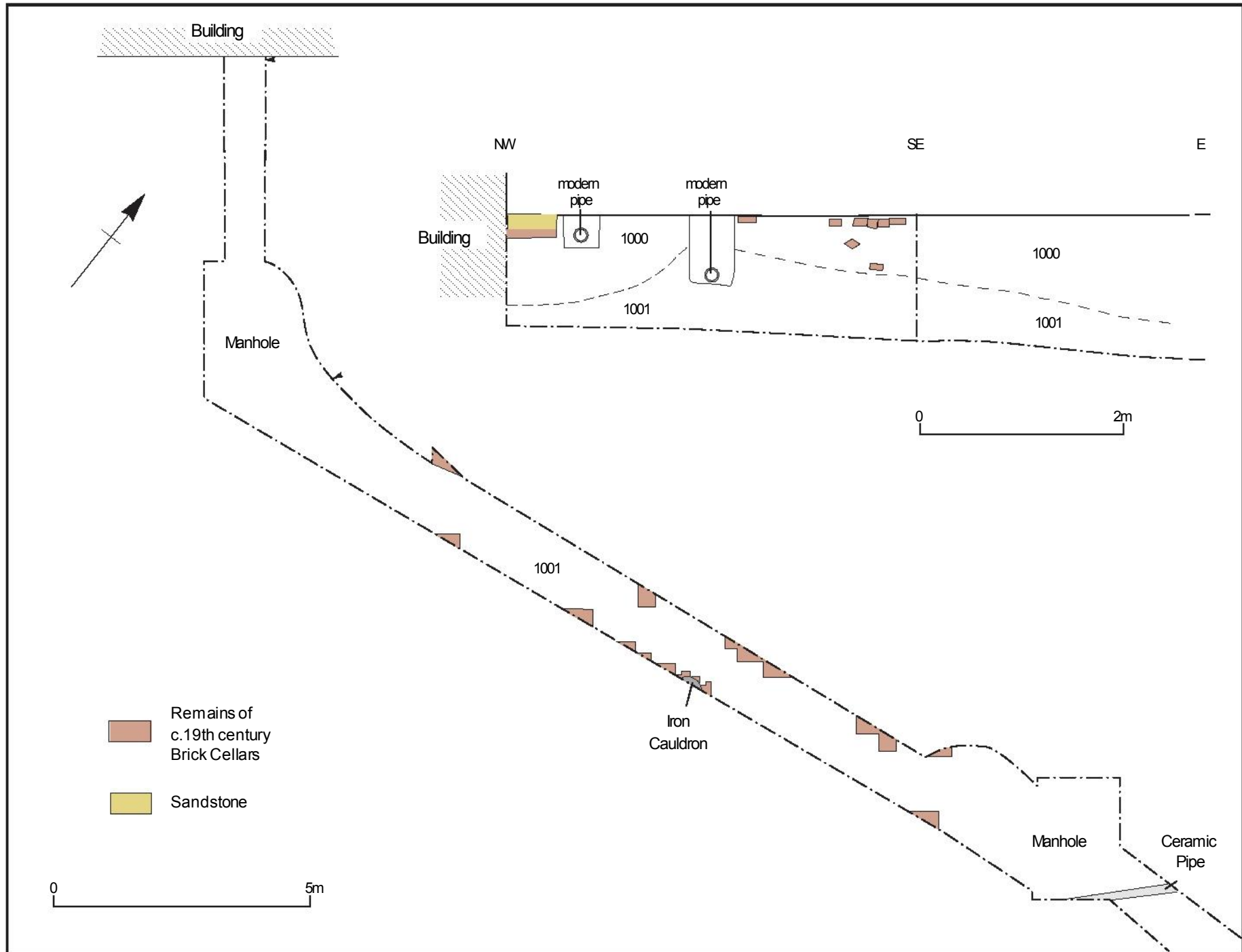


Fig.4



Plate 1



Plate 2



Plate 3



Plate 4

