

**Former Corus
Steelworks, Bloomfield
Road, Tipton**

**Historic Building
Recording and Analysis
2006**

Checked by
Supervisor..... date.....
Project Manager..... date.....

Project No. 1484

August 2006

**Former Corus Steelworks, Bloomfield Road, Tipton
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By

Michael Lobb

For

David Wilson Homes (West Midlands) Ltd

For further information please contact:

Alex Jones (Director)

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>

Former Corus Steelworks, Bloomfield Road, Tipton

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SUMMARY

In August 2006 Birmingham Archaeology carried out a program of building recording and analysis at the former Corus Steelworks, Bloomfield Road, Tipton, West Midlands (NGR SO 9540 9353). The work was carried out in advance of the proposed redevelopment of the site by David Wilson Homes (West Midlands). A collection of buildings dating from the early to mid-20th century were recorded to RCHME Levels 1-3. The recording work was undertaken with a view to identifying earlier industrial fabric, none of which was apparent.

Former Corus Steelworks, Bloomfield Road, Tipton

1 INTRODUCTION

In August 2006 Birmingham Archaeology carried out a program of building analysis and recording at the former Corus Steelworks, Tipton. The work stemmed from an initial assessment of the site carried out by Kelleher (2006), which identified buildings of archaeological or historical interest. The work was carried out on behalf of David Wilson Homes (West Midlands) in advance of the redevelopment of the site (Planning Application Number DC/05/45017, Appendices 2 & 3).

This report outlines the results of the recording work, which was carried out in August 2006, and which was prepared in accordance with the Institute of Field Archaeologists *Standard and Guidance for the Archaeological Investigation and Recording of Standing Buildings and Structures* (IFA 2001).

The assessment conformed to a brief produced by Sandwell Metropolitan Borough Council (Appendix 4), and a written scheme of investigation by Birmingham Archaeology (Appendix 5), which was approved by the local planning authority prior to implementation, in accordance with guidelines laid down in Planning Policy Guidance Note 15 (DoE 1990).

2 SITE LOCATION

The site is located on the east side of Bloomfield Road, approximately 1 kilometre NW of Tipton, West Midlands, and is centred on NGR SO 9540 9353 (Fig. 1).

3 OBJECTIVES

- To establish the origins, chronology, technical history and significance of the site.
- To make a detailed record of the buildings stated
- To identify any architectural features which could be included within the development as public art.
- To create a detailed site archive to be deposited with the Community History and Archives Service, Smethwick Library.

Specific building recording objectives were as follows:

Level 1

Buildings B1, B3 and G, with a view to identifying and understanding earlier industrial fabric.

Level 2

Building I

Level 3

Buildings C and N

Buildings have been identified according to the names given in *Former Corus Steelworks, Bloomfield Road, Tipton: An Archaeological Impact Assessment* (Kelleher, 2006) (Appendix 1). A plan of the site showing the building names is given as Figure 2 of this report.

4 METHODOLOGY

In general, the work was carried out in accordance with the advice offered by the Institute of Field Archaeologists (I.F.A. 2001) and English Heritage (2006).

4.1 Documentary Research

Documentary research was carried out for the archaeological impact assessment (Kelleher 2006). The historical background from the Phase I report has been included in this report.

4.2 Written Record

A written record of each building was compiled in the field on *pro forma* building and room record sheets, noting details of building type, date(s), materials, plan, and elevations. These notes were combined with the results of the documentary research to produce an analytical account of each structure including historical and architectural context.

4.3 Drawn Record

The metric survey results consist of floor plans of Buildings C, I and N carried out using a laser distance meter (Leica Disto), along with the main elevation of Building C carried out using a reflectorless EDM. These were used to produce AutoCAD drawings at a scale of 1:100 for plans and 1:50 for elevations (Figures 4-6). The drawings produced are based on English Heritage conventions (2006).

4.4 Photographic Record

The photographic survey comprises both general and detail shots using a high-resolution digital camera. All detail shots include a scale. Photographs were recorded on *pro forma* index sheets detailing subject, direction, photographer and date.

5 HISTORICAL AND ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

The historical background to the site has been appended to this document (Appendix 1) from the Phase I Archaeological Impact Assessment (Kelleher 2006).

6 BUILDINGS DESCRIPTIONS AND ANALYSES

Level 1 Buildings

6.1 Building B1 & B3

Exterior

Mid-20th century factory shed (Plate 1). The structure is composed of a large steel framework, infilled to a height of c.2m with red/brown brick (9"x3"x4½") laid in Flemish Stretcher bond. Above this the walls are constructed of corrugated steel sheeting. The walls are cut by large openings covered by steel roller shutters to allow vehicular access. The walls are perforate by large steel-framed multi-pane windows. The roof is composed of the same corrugated steel sheeting with large outlet flues.

Interior

Large factory shed composed of four bays running N-S with a further bay at the S end running east-west. The interior space is approximately 2-3 stories in height (Plate 2). The floor is composed of steel-topped tiles laid over concrete. At the S end of the building are a series of sunken pits, which appear to be large moulds for steel. The building is supported by a large steel frame composed of bolted steel I-beams, open between bays (Plate 3). The exterior walls are composed of brick to a height of c.2m. Above this are large metal-framed, multi-pane windows. The interior contains several smaller buildings, built as offices, all of late-20th century date. Each bay of the interior has an overhead travelling crane. The roof of the building is composed of steel I-beams supporting corrugated steel sheeting (Plate 4).

Interpretation

Buildings B1 and B3 were recommended for Level 1 recording to establish if earlier industrial fabric was contained within the structure. Although earlier material is present, it is of early-20th century date and does not form a coherent pattern.

6.2 Building G

Exterior

Mid-20th century factory shed (Plate 5). The structure is composed of a large steel framework, infilled to a height of c.1.6m with red/brown brick (9"x3"x4½") laid in Flemish Stretcher bond. Above this the walls are constructed of corrugated asbestos sheeting, covered by steel sheeting on the exterior. The walls are cut by large openings covered by steel roller shutters to allow vehicular access. The walls are perforated by large steel-framed multi-pane windows. The roof is composed of corrugated asbestos sheeting with clear corrugated sheets to allow light to enter. A few patches of seemingly earlier brickwork exist, measuring 8½"x2½"x4¼" but these are again only 1.6m high and of no discernible pattern. They appear instead to be re-used Victorian brick, as they are machine-cut and early 20th-century in appearance.

Interior

Large factory shed composed of five bays running NE-SW with a further three bays at the S end running SE-NW. The interior space is approximately 2-3 stories in height (Plate 6). The floor is composed of concrete. Throughout the building are a series of sunken pits (Plate 7). The building is supported by a large steel frame composed of bolted steel I-beams, open between bays. The exterior walls are composed of brick to a height of c.2m. Above this are large metal-framed, multi-pane windows. Each bay of the interior has an overhead travelling crane. The roof of the building is composed of steel I-beams supporting corrugated steel sheeting.

Interpretation

Building G was recommended for Level 1 recording to establish if earlier industrial fabric was contained within the structure. Although earlier material is present, it is of early-20th century date and does not form a coherent pattern.

Level 2 Buildings

6.3 Building I

Exterior

NW Elevation

Single-storey building with two segmental-arched bays (Plate 9). The walls are composed of red/brown brick (9"x3"x4½") laid in Flemish stretcher bond. At the NE end is a large opening with a concrete lintel covered by a steel roller shutter. To the SW of this is a large timber-framed, multi-light window with a concrete lintel. To the SW of this, central to the façade, is a steel I-post. To the SW of this is an identical window. To the SW of this is a doorway of early to mid-20th century appearance with a concrete lintel. At the SW end of the elevation is a small window whose features are obscured by wooden boarding.

SW Elevation

At the NW end of the elevation is a boarded over window with a concrete lintel. The SE end of the elevation is obscured by later mid-20th century additions to the building.

SE Elevation

Now contained within later extensions to the building. Central steel I-post 8" wide. To the SW of this is a blocked up doorway with a concrete lintel. To the SW of this is an inserted double doorway with a timber lintel.

Interior (Figure 4)

Two-bay workshop of early-20th century date (Plate 10). The SW portion of the room has been partitioned off to form a small office/workshop. The floor of the room is concrete, covered by metal-topped tiles. The walls are composed of painted brick (9"x3"x4½") laid in Flemish stretcher bond. Central to the wall, and at the NW end is a steel I-post, supporting a steel I-beam running parallel to the wall. This supports an overhead travelling crane of mid to late-20th century date. The SE wall of the room has a large inserted double doorway with an I-beam lintel within the SW bay of the room. To the NE of this is a bricked-up doorway with a concrete lintel. At the SW end of the wall, contained within the partition is another bricked-up doorway with a concrete lintel. The SW wall has a large inserted opening with an I-beam lintel at its SE end leading to the exterior via the mid to late-20th century extension. To the NW of this, central to the wall is a doorway through to the extension. At the NW end of the wall is a timber-framed multi-light casement window. The NW wall has an identical window at its SW end. To the NE of this is a doorway of early to mid-20th century appearance. To the NE of this are two identical large, multi-light timber-framed windows. To the NE of those is a large metal roller shutter for vehicular entry.

Interpretation

Building I is a small industrial workshop of early-20th century date. Although it possesses a Belfast truss roof (Plate 11), it is of no great architectural significance or importance.

Level 3 Buildings

6.4 Building C

Exterior

Single-storey building of early-20th century date. Constructed primarily of timber with weatherboarded walls and timber-framed windows (Plate 12). The roof is pitched and covered by felt.

S Elevation

Main elevation of the building (Fig. 5). At ground level the building rests on a brick sill, faced with random sized, square-cut ashlar dressing at the E end (Plate 13). At the W end of the building are four evenly spaced 12-pane timber-framed windows, flush with the wall with a slightly projected chamfered timber label above, and a slightly projecting timber sill. To the E of this is a wide exterior porch with a central set of double doors of mid-20th century appearance with three glazed upper panels. To the E of this are four further evenly spaced 12-pane timber-framed windows. To the E of this is a single doorway filled by a door with of mid-20th century appearance with 3 glazed upper panels. E of this are four 12-pane timber-framed windows arranged immediately adjacent to each other to form one continuous glazed section. To the E of this is a large window with a large central fixed light, with side panes topped by top hung vents. E of this is a room projecting forward from the main body of the building to form a small porch. This has a large central window with a large fixed pane to the E with a narrow casement to the W. To the E of this projection is an identical window. The roof of the building is pitched and covered by felt.

W Elevation

At ground floor level there are three central 12-pane timber-framed windows, flush with the wall with a chamfered timber label and a slightly projecting timber sill. To the S of these is a doorway of early to mid-20th century date with three lower panels and a glazed upper section. The gable eaves of the elevation are different in character to the rest of the building, the weatherboarded panels being set vertically as opposed to horizontally, and having been painted white and black in a mock-Tudor style (Plate 14). Central to the eaves is a large 16-pane window above a louvred vent. This appears to be contained within the attic space and is not visible from the interior.

N Elevation

At the W end of the elevation are two 12-pane, timber-framed casement windows. To the E of this is an exterior lean-to shed composed of corrugated iron sheeting with a wooden door. E of this the elevation projects forward from the main building. At the W end of this projection is an 8-pane, timber-framed casement window. To the E of this are two 4-pane, frosted glass, timber-framed windows set higher up in the wall. E of this is another 8-paned window. To the E of this is a boarded over small square window, identical in size to the 4-pane windows to the W. E of this is a long 3-pane window whose central pane has been boarded over to form to separate windows. To the E of this is an early-20th century door leading to G7. E of this are three irregularly spaced single-paned windows. To the E of this is a recessed section, with a doorway on its W wall leading into G7, and a door on its S wall marked 'LADIES LAVATORY', this room was not accessible at the time of survey. E of this recessed section are three evenly-spaced 4-pane, timber-framed windows filled by frosted glass. To the E of this the projecting section of the elevation ends. E of this are two large, timber-framed windows with a large fixed pane to one side, with a side pane with top-hung vent above.

E Elevation

Gable end of the building. At ground floor level are two symmetrically opposed, timber-framed windows with one large fixed pane and a casement to one side. These are flush with the wall with a projecting chamfered timber label and a slightly projecting timber sill. The bargeboard has a simple diagonal chamfer to its edges.

Interior (Figure 5)

G1

Located in the SW corner of the building, SW of G2. Floored with wooden boards covered by lino. The walls are composed of stud, which has been panelled to mid-height, and papered and painted above. The E wall has a central doorway through to G2. The S wall of the room has two evenly spaced 12-pane, timber-framed casement windows with early-20th century latches. The W wall has a doorway at its S end of early-20th century date leading to the exterior. To the N of this is a 12-pane, timber-framed casement window identical to those on the S wall. The ceiling of the room is painted stud panelling, and pitches to the S from its central line.

G2

Located at the W end of the building, the widest part of the room runs the full width of the main block (Plate 16). Floored with wooden boards covered by lino. The walls are composed of stud, which has been panelled to mid-height, and papered and painted above. The N wall has two identical 12-pane, timber-framed casement windows at its W end. To the E of this is a brick and tile fireplace (Plate 17). E of this is a 6-panelled wooden door of early-20th century appearance leading through to G4. This is to the W of a similar doorway leading through to G5. E of this is a mid to late-20th century door leading through to G6. At the E end of the wall the room is open through to G7. The E wall of the room is again open to G7 at the N end of the wall. To the S of this is a doorway leading through to G8. The S wall of the room steps forwards at the E end to allow for G3 behind, central to this projecting section is a doorway through to G3. To the W of this is a 12-pane, timber-framed casement window. W of this, central to the length of the room is a set of glazed doors leading to the exterior. This is to the E of two further 12-pane, timber-framed casement windows. The W end of the wall again steps forward, this time to allow for G1 behind. The W wall has two 12-pane, timber-framed casement windows located to the N of G1. The ceiling of the room is composed of five bays separated by wooden trusses supported by metal struts.

G3

Located to the S of G2, W of G8, E of G3a. Floored with wooden boards covered by carpet. The walls are composed of stud, which has been panelled to mid-height, and papered and painted above. The N wall has a doorway at its W end leading through to G2. The E wall has a doorway of mid-20th century date at its S end leading through to G8. The S wall has two evenly spaced 12-pane, timber-framed casement windows. The W wall of the room is a later partition, which projects forward into the room at its S end. At its S end the wall has a doorway through to G3a. To the N of this is an internal single-paned window looking into G3a. The ceiling of the room is composed of painted wooden boards.

G3a

Located to the W of G3, S and E of G2. Floored with wooden boards covered by carpet. The walls are composed of stud, which has been panelled to mid-height, and papered and painted above. The E wall of the room has a doorway at its S end filled by a door of mid-20th century date leading through to G3. To the N of this is an internal single-paned window looking into G3. The S wall of the room has a central 12-pane, timber-framed casement window. The ceiling of the room is composed of painted wooden boards.

G4

Toilet located to the N of G2, W of G5. Floored with wooden boards covered by lino. The walls are composed of stud, covered by painted wooden boards. The N wall is divided into two cubicles to the W, with a long narrow storeroom to the E. Each of these compartments contains a small square single-paned window. The S wall of the room has a doorway to the W of centre leading through to G2, filled by an early-20th century 6-panelled door. The W end of the wall, along with the S end of the W wall forms the rear of the chimney-stack in

G2, and is composed of painted brick as opposed to stud. The ceiling of the room is composed of painted wooden boards.

G5

Located to the N of G2, E of G4, W of G6. Small square storage room. Floored with wooden boards covered by lino. The walls are composed of painted wooden stud covered by simple wooden shelving. The S wall has a central doorway through to G2. This is filled by a 6-panelled wooden door of early-20th century appearance. The ceiling is composed of wooden stud.

G6

Located to the N of G2, E of G5, W of G7. Large larder. The floor is composed of concrete. The walls are composed of painted stud. The N wall of the room has two evenly spaced 4-pane bottom hung vents. The E wall has a doorway towards the N leading through to G7, filled by a plain door of mid-20th century date. The S wall of the room has a doorway to the W leading through to G2, filled by a plain door of mid-20th century date. The ceiling of the room is composed of painted stud, and pitches downwards at its N end.

G7

Kitchens (Plate 18). Located to the N and E of G2, E of G6, N of G8. The floor is composed of wooden boards covered by lino. The walls are composed of painted stud. The N wall has an early-20th century door at its W end leading to the exterior. Central to the wall are two large, single-paned windows, with a further identical window at the E end of the wall. The E wall has a doorway at its N end leading to the exterior. This is filled by a mid-20th century door with a glazed upper section. The S wall has a central doorway leading through to G8, filled by a plain mid-20th century door. To the W of this is a hatchway opening into G8. The W wall of the room is open at its S end to G2 to the W. To the N of this is a doorway filled by a door of early to mid-20th century date which leads through to G6. The ceiling of the room is composed of painted stud and pitches downward to the N.

G8

L-shaped corridor running axially down the eastern half of the building. Located to the E of G3 and G2, S of G7 and G13, N of G9 and G10. The floor is composed of wooden boards covered by lino. The walls are composed of stud, which has been panelled to mid-height, and papered and painted above. The N wall has a hatch at its W end looking into G7. To the E of this is a doorway leading through to G7, filled by a door of mid-20th century date. The E wall has a central doorway filled by a door of mid-20th century date leading through to G11. The S wall of the room has a doorway at its E end leading through to G10, filled by a door of early-20th century date. To the W of this is an identical door leading through to G9. At the W end the corridor turns to run to the S, leading to a glazed doorway of early-20th century date which opens into G8a. The W wall of the room has a doorway at its N end filled by a door of early-20th century date, which leads through to G2. The ceiling of the room is composed of painted wooden panelling.

G8a

Small porch located to the S of G8, E of G3 and W of G9. The floor is composed of wooden boards covered by lino. The walls are composed of stud, which has been panelled to mid-height, and papered and painted above. The N wall of the room is taken up by a doorway leading through to G8, this is filled by a door of early-20th date with six glazed panels in its upper half. The S wall of the room is filled by a doorway leading to the exterior, filled by a door with three glazed upper panels, of mid-20th century appearance. The W wall of the

room has a central doorway of mid-20th century date leading through to G3. The ceiling of the room is composed of painted wooden panelling.

G9

Located to the S and E of G8, W of G10. The floor is composed of wooden boarding covered by carpet. The walls are composed of stud, which has been panelled to mid-height, and papered and painted above. The N wall has a doorway at its W end leading through to G8. This is filled by a door of early-20th century date. The S wall of the room is filled by four 12-pane, timber-framed casement windows set immediately adjacent to each other to form a continuous glazed section the length of the wall. The ceiling of the room is composed of painted stud.

G10

Located S of G8, W of G9, E of G11. The floor is composed of wooden boarding covered by carpet. The walls are composed of stud covered by wallpaper. The N wall has a central doorway leading to G8, filled by a door of mid-20th century appearance. The S wall of the room has a large central window with a central fixed pane, with a side pane to either side topped by a top-hung vent. The ceiling of the room is composed of stud covered by paper. Around the central light fixture is an ornamental wooden surround of Art Deco style (Plate 19).

G11

Located at the E end of the building, running the full width of the main block. Lies to the E of G8, G10 and G13, and to the N of G12. The floor is composed of wooden boarding covered by carpet. The walls are composed of stud covered by wallpaper. The N wall of the room has two evenly spaced, symmetrically opposed timber-framed windows of early to mid-20th century date. Each has a casement to one side with a fixed lower light beneath a top-hung vent to the other side. The E wall has two evenly-spaced, symmetrically opposed timber-framed windows, composed of a large fixed pane with a casement to one side. The S wall of the room has a window at its E end identical to those on the E wall. At the W end of the wall is a double doorway leading through to G12 to the S. This is filled by a set of glazed doors of mid-20th century appearance. The W wall of the room has two identical doorways of early to mid-20th century date, set to the N of centre. The doorway to the S leads through to G8, whilst that to the N leads through to G13. The ceiling of the room is composed of stud, covered by paper and painted.

G12

Small porch located to the S of G11, projects S from the main building. The floor is composed of concrete covered by lino. The walls are composed of painted studwork. The N wall of the room has a large set of double doors leading through to G11 at its E end. These have glazed central panels and are of mid-20th century appearance. The S wall of the room has a large central window with a large fixed light to the E end and a casement to the W. The W wall of the room has a doorway at its S end leading to the exterior. This is filled by a door of mid to late-20th century date with a large, central glazed section. The ceiling of the room is composed of stud, which has been papered and painted, and which pitches downward from the N.

G13

Toilet block located to the N of G8, W of G11. The floor is composed of concrete covered by lino. The walls are tiled to mid-height with mid to late-20th century tiling. The ceiling is composed of painted stud, with a central plexiglass skylight.

Interpretation

Building C is an early to mid-20th century prefabricated weather-boarded building which functioned as the site canteen. A clear division can be seen between the large, communal dining hall to the W end of the building, as opposed to the small, more private rooms to the E. These are presumably the dining rooms of the management of the steelworks. The rooms are accessed by separate entrances at opposite ends of the building, and have separate toilet facilities, showing a clear segregation of management and workforce.

6.5 Building N

Exterior

Second World War air-raid shelter. The bulk of the structure is composed of concrete, and covered by a low mound of earth (Plate 20). The entrance to the shelter, at the W end of the S elevation is framed on either side by a sloping brick wall, composed of red/brown brick (9¼"x3"x4½") laid in stretcher bond and capped by concrete. This leads to a small porch-like area with concrete walls and ceiling covered by a layer of plaster held to the surface using a metal mesh.

Interior (Figure 6)

The interior of the shelter has a floor composed of concrete. The walls are composed of concrete rendered with plaster. The north and south walls are pitched from mid-height. The W wall has a central doorway through to the porch area (Plate 21). The door has a substantial timber frame, containing a large timber door. The E wall has an iron ladder rising central to the wall leading to a small, square hatch in the ceiling leading to the exterior.

Interpretation

The 1937 Air Raid Precautions Act required the provision of adequate shelter for workers at sites such as the Brymill Steel Works. Although passed in 1937, the Act did not become law until January 1st 1938 (Dobinson 2000, p25), with most factories not beginning construction until the first wave of bombing began in 1939-40 (Nichol, K 2006, *pers. comm.*). This explains the absence of the structure from the 1938 O.S. map of the works (Fig. 3). The structure is a semi-sunken shelter, and is unusual in having a pitched roof profile rather than a parabolic cross-section (Lowry 1996, p71).

7 CONCLUSIONS

The buildings surveyed represent varying aspects of the early to mid 20th-century steelworks, from factory production (Buildings B1, B3 & G) and workshop manufacture (Building I) to staff facilities (Building C) and protection (Building N). As individual buildings they are neither unique architecturally or historically, but as a group they provide an interesting insight into the organisation and development of an early-20th industrial complex.

8 ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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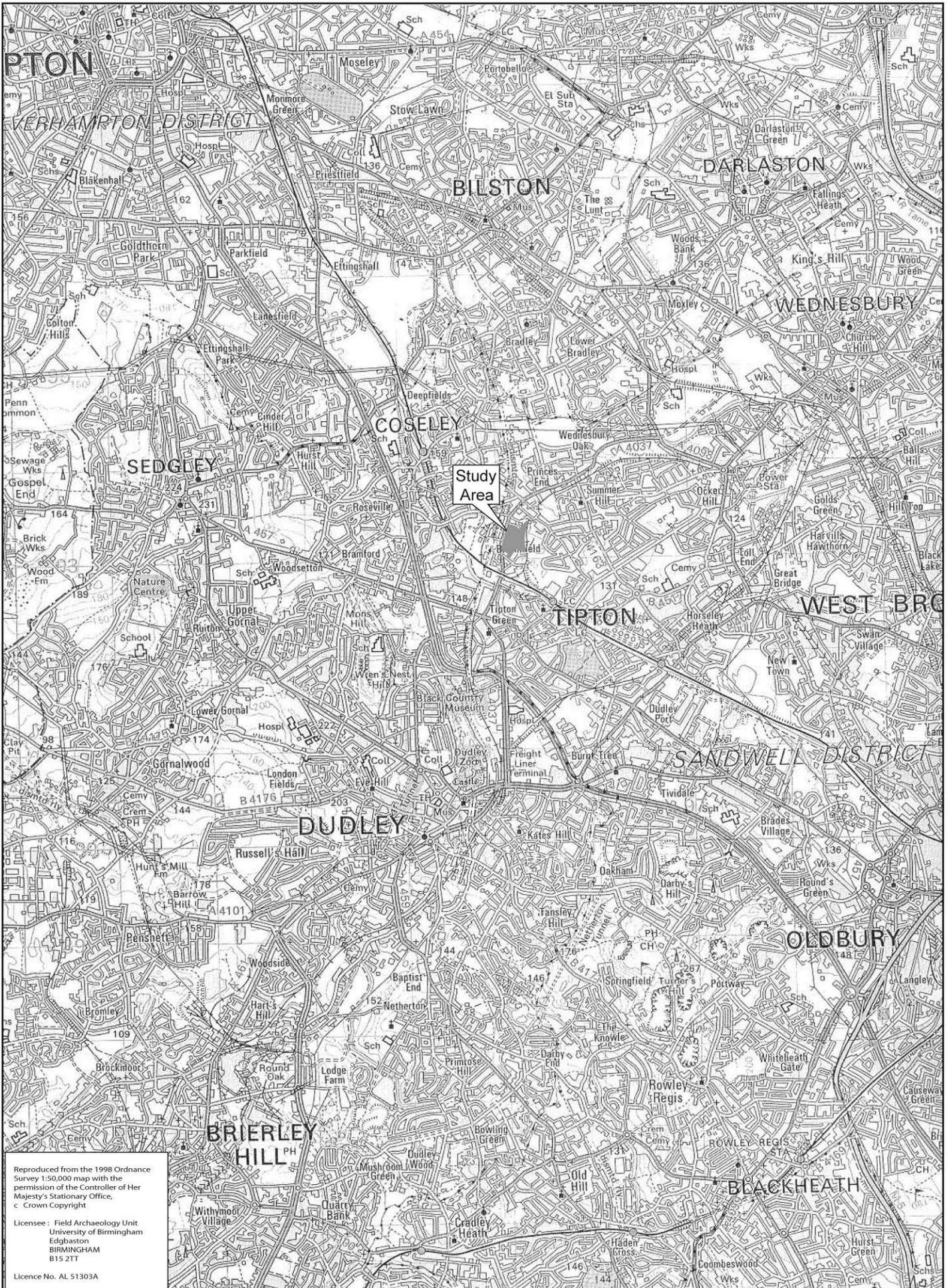
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University of Birmingham
Edgbaston
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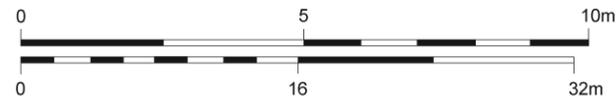
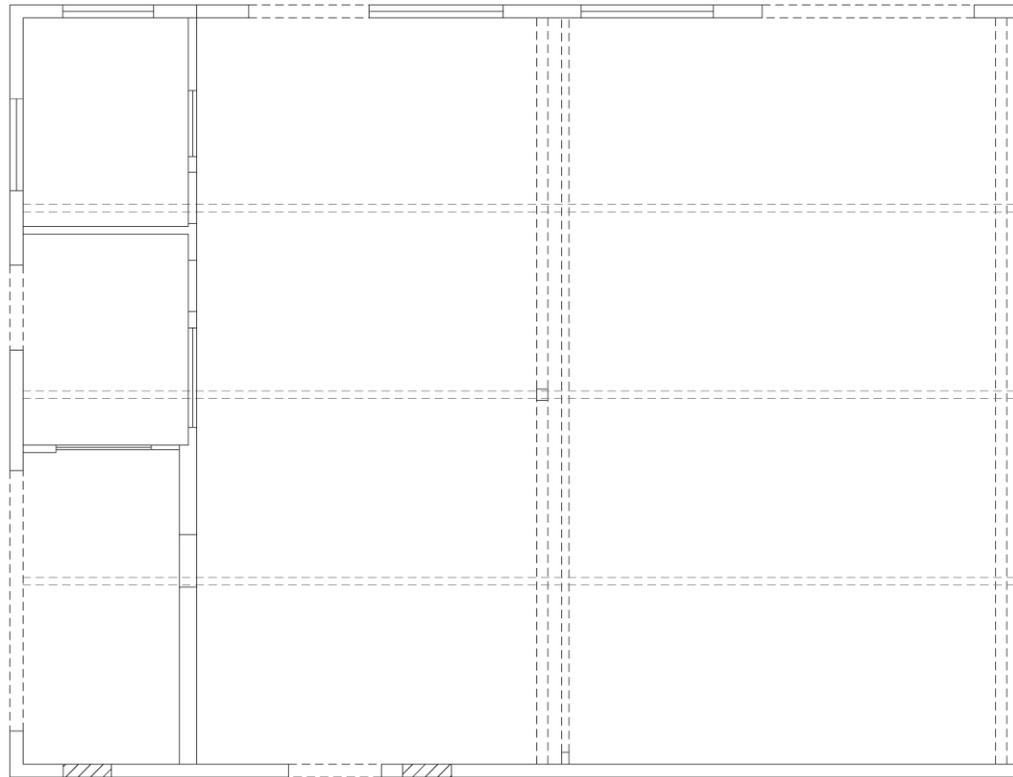
Licence No. AL 51303A

Fig.1



Fig.2

Building I



Dwg. Location

Surveyed By. **ML**

Date **0806**

Notes



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B 15 2TT

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📠 0121 414 5516

barch@bham.ac.uk

<http://www.barch.bham.ac.uk>



Pro.No.
1484

Fig.No.
Fig.4

Client
Sandwell MBC

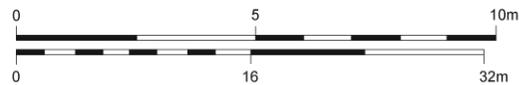
Bldg. Address
Building I, Corus Steelworks, Bloomfield Road, Tipton

NGR
SO 898844

Building C



South Elevation



Dwg. Location

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Date: **0806**

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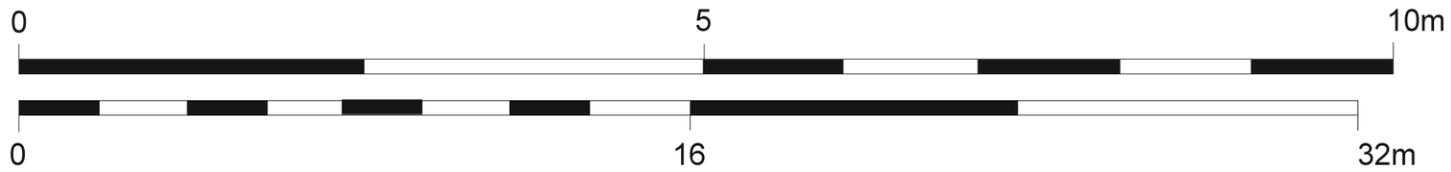
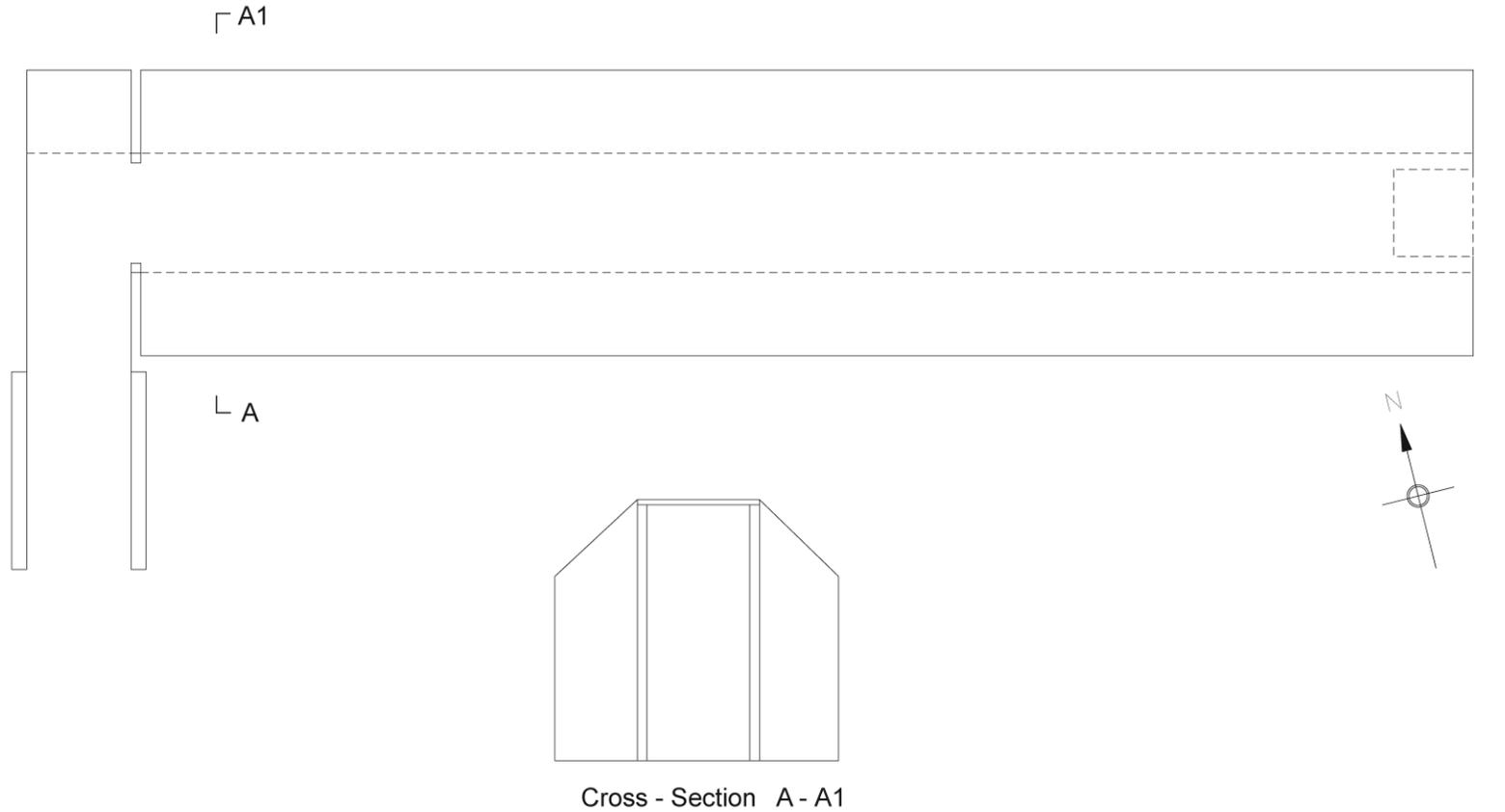
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Institute of Field
Archaeology

Building N



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Edgbaston, Birmingham,
B15 2TT

☎ 0121 414 5513

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Plate 1



Plate 2



Plate 3



Plate 4



Plate 5



Plate 6



Plate 7

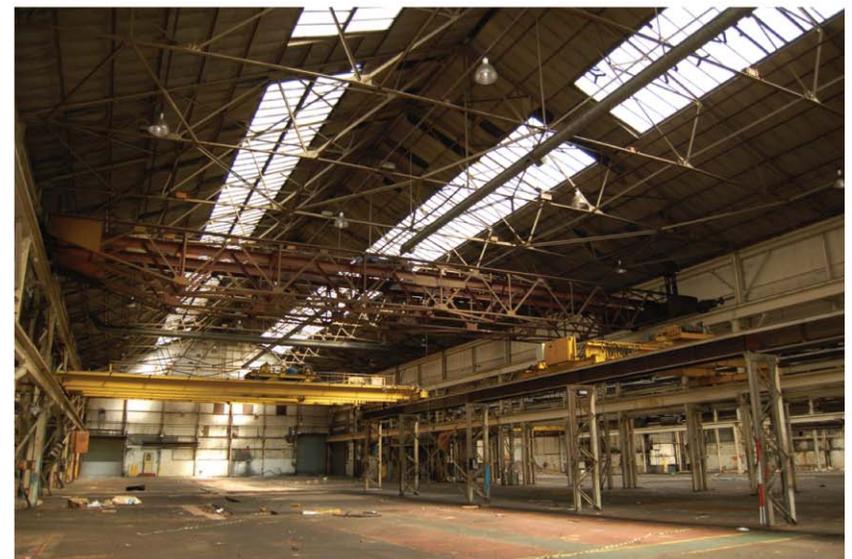


Plate 8



Plate 9



Plate 10



Plate 11



Plate 12



Plate 13



Plate 14



Plate 15



Plate 16



Plate 17



Plate 18



Plate 19



Plate 20



Plate 21

APPENDIX 1

EXTRACT FROM 'FORMER CORUS STEELWORKS, BLOOMFIELD ROAD, TIPTON: AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT (PHASE 1) 2006 (BIRMINGHAM ARCHAEOLOGY REPORT NO. 1461) BY S.KELLEHER

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

W.H. Duignan, the authority on Staffordshire place names, traces the development of the placename Tipton, or Tibbington, as it has also been known historically, from the Anglo Saxon feminine personal name Tibbe (Duignan 1902, 153). Hence, meaning the town of Tibbe, or the settlement of Tibbe. Cockin (2000, 587) proposes an alternative provenance noting that the original name may have been Tipstone, which would signify the name, is related to a stave or a spear shaped stone. It is first recorded as Tibintone in the Domesday Book, and as Tibinton and Tybeton from the mid 13th-century. It may also derive from St. Tibbe or St. Tybbe, the patroness of hunting who died in 696. However, the former is the more likely provenance. This is corroborated by Mills (2003, 463), and Watts (2004, 619) who note that it refers to an estate associated with Tibba, an Old English personal name. The Domesday Book (1086) informs us that 'in Tibintone five carucates of land were held for the Bishop of Lichfield by one William' (Hackwood 2000, 3).

Until about 1700 Tipton was a small village surrounded by fields (Raven 2004, 318) and was 'even considered as a pretty place' prior to 'mans eager search for the wealth hidden below its surface' (Hackwood 2000, 1). The only documented event of note to have occurred in the locality was the Battle of Tipton Green in 1644. In 1621 Dud Dudley (a resident of Tipton) claimed to be the first to smelt iron with coal. Thus providing an even greater impetus for the residents of Tipton to exploit their dual resources. In 1712 Thomas Newcomen installed the first of his revolutionary steam cylinder and piston beam engines at Lord Dudley's Coneygre Colliery in Tipton (Raven 2004, 318). James Watt's first commercial steam engine was installed in the Bloomfield area of Tipton in 1776 (Dudley 1972, 115).

Tipton continued to 'grow in a scruffy formless fashion' (Pallister 1976, 184). Until the end of the 18th-century Tipton was a 'comparatively unimportant industrial parish' (Court 1938, 185), its main produce up to this were small metal wares such as nails, screws, and edge tools. The minor coal, iron, and limestone workings that had their roots in medieval times were expanding. Between 1801 and 1901 the population had increased by eight times. Tipton 'mushroomed' in this period 'into a thriving but shapeless town which embodies the effects of the industrial revolution at their worst' (Pallister 1976, 205).

Tipton became the scene of great ironworking and coal mining activities, with a corresponding growth in heavy industry. The geology of the area was ideal for industrial growth, its unprecedented wealth in mineral and fuel resources ensured that its inhabitants had learnt how best to exploit these resources from an early date. It became a centre of industrial innovation and invention. Tipton became an important centre of this industrial innovation. In Tipton 'Vulcan is everywhere supreme and from the thousands of hearths that constitute his altars, never cease to arise columns of incense. To the Tiptonian therefore, a smoke laden sky is always regarded as the outward visible sign of the towns prosperity' (Hackwood 2000, i).

Tipton is situated in an area abounding with rich resources of iron and coal. This wealth has helped shape its character and identity. This characterisation is nowhere more obvious than in the 19th-century trade directories. These sources describe Tipton as a place where 'the coal mines are said to be inexhaustible' (Pigot and Co. Directory, 1828/29); where 'the parish is celebrated for the richness of its coal and ironstone, and for the number and extent of the iron furnaces, forges, and rolling and slitting mills' (History, Gazetteer & Directory of Staffordshire, 1834). It is an area, which is 'celebrated for the richness of its ironmines, and the number of its ironworks' (Staffordshire General and Commercial Directory 1818); and a place 'noted for its extensive trade in iron' (Kelly's Directory of Staffordshire, 1896, Post Office Directory, 1850).

The expansion of these industries was further augmented by developments in transportation. The extension of the canal system into the area from the 1860s, and later the railways from the mid 19th-century, saw an increased sphere of demand for, and consequently a greater output of, the industrial product from the area. The extent of the canal system in Tipton earned it the epithet 'Venice of the Midlands', or as it is locally known 'Tip'n on-the-cut': <http://www.laws.sandwell.gov.uk/ccm/content/sandwelldirect/leisuredirect/history/historyofsandwell.en;jsessionid=bSFc8Hn6BSQ4>. This canal network grew to such an extent to serve the expanding industries, that by 1828 the sinuosity of the canal was such that it exceeded 'twenty miles within the parish, and an inland navigation (was) afforded by it to all parts of the kingdom' (Pigot and Co. 1828/29). By the end of the 18th-century Bloomfield Colliery, to the east of the study area, one of the first deep coal mines in the Black Country, was reaching depths of over 300 feet. By 1801 there were six iron firms in Tipton, manufacturing nails, fireirons, fenders, and hinges for local and foreign markets. This expansion of the iron industry was further augmented by the Napoleonic Wars. At the beginning of the 19th-century Tipton 'had thus become an exceedingly busy and prosperous Black Country town, with an extraordinary variety of industries, many of which had close business links' (Court 1938, 185).

In 1829 the Bloomfield Ironworks was set up in the study area by Joseph Hall. This was to become one of the most successful ironworks in the country, and gained international recognition for the quality of its wares. Hall bought the land at Bloomfield in partnership with Thomas Lewis and built a small ironworks. Here he set about conducting a series of experiments. He was later joined by two new partners, Richard Bradley and William Barrows, and built up a very large and prosperous business. A Mr Bramah later succeeded Mr Bradley. In 1846 Barrow and Hall became joint owners, until the death of Hall in 1862. Over 200 years previous, Dud Dudley had invented how to produce the raw material, now through his experimentations at Bloomfield, Hall had invented the process for refining it (Parkes, 7). This process became known as 'pig boiling' or 'puddling', which 'produced a purer and more uniform metal from practically any normal pig' (Allen 1966, 14). Gale describes this process in detail:

Pig iron was charged into the furnace in the usual way, the *fettling* or lining of bull-dog and scale being repaired before charging as required. The metal was then melted down and in due course it began to *work*, as the oxygen from the fettling united with the carbon in the iron. The reaction was violent, and for about half an hour the surface of the metal boiled, with bubbles of carbon monoxide breaking through, and burning with little blue flames or *puddler's candles*. Because of this violent ebullition, the process became known as *pig boiling* or *wet puddling*'. (Gale 1966, 68)

His improvements greatly reduced the cost of production, increased outputs, and were the basis of the prosperity of the Black Country in the mid 19th-century (Greenslade and Jenkins 1967, 122). The BBH brand of iron produced at Bloomfield was held in a very high esteem, and it acquired world-wide popularity for both 'durability and toughness' (Parks 1915,223). Hall's own book 'The Iron Question' (1957) illustrates the increased production capacity; 'taking the Bloomfield firm say in 1831... the produce of that time, being the time that they commenced, was about 50 tons a week, and now they average 900 tons per week'. This growth in production meant that the firm not only drew upon large supplies of pig iron and bar iron from the local area (estimated at 30,000 tons a year), but also sourced its supplies from much further afield. Pig iron was obtained from Shropshire, the Forest of Dean, and Wales. Scrap iron was purchased from Birmingham, charcoal from the Forest of Dean and Birmingham, and cinder and 'hammer slug' from Goldshill and other works (Greenslade and Jenkins 1967, 128). By 1863 the ironworks were the largest in south Staffordshire. The firm was producing heavy ironwork for railways, steam engine boilers, chains, anchors, and cables. Probably the most famous piece produced at these works was the Great Eastern Anchor in 1866, which was at the time the largest anchor in the world. In 1872 the firm employed over 800 staff, producing over 40,000 tons a year from 100 puddling furnaces and 8 mills (Hackwood 2000, 172).

By the mid-1870s the iron industry was entering into its last phase. The Black Country ironworkers were beginning to feel the weight of competition from other areas with better ore supplies and more modern plant. The production of mild steel at this time was also having an effect. Bloomfield's sister works at the Factory Iron Works in Tipton, and the Tipton Green Ironworks were closed down in 1877 and 1879 respectively. Bloomfield itself carried on until 1902 when it was shut down, and offered for sale in Birmingham newspapers (Gale 1966, 121). The site was sold in 1904 for the sake of the coal underneath. Gale (1966, 122) mentions a plan and sale catalogue issued when the works were put on the market (Gale found this at Tipton Library. A search for this catalogue has of yet proved fruitless). The plans show:

'a typical, if rather larger than usual Black Country ironworks. Bloomfield Ironworks had been built, as was the case with almost every other ironworks in the district, on the banks of the canal, but had later been connected with the mainline railway by sidings. The works were, except for pig iron (the firm was unusual for a large one in the Black Country as it had never owned blast furnaces) entirely self-sufficient. They had bulldog kilns, bulldog being still an important fettling material, their own foundry and fitting shops for maintenance purposes, and extensive roll-turning equipment. The plan shows clearly the haphazard way in which the works had grown up, producing a unit that was far from efficient. It must in fairness be added, however that although this condition applied very generally to the works of the Black Country, it was by no means confined to ironworks or to the Black Country itself. There was ample land in the occupation of the firm, but the various rolling mills lay clustered together and were with the puddling furnaces, at all angles. Altogether just over 18 acres, were fenced off, but only a small part of this area was occupied with buildings. The rolling mills were under cover and roofs were provided for such departments as had valuable machinery, such as lathes, but quite a number of puddling furnaces had no protection from the weather at all.

It is interesting to see, too, that while waste heat was used to some extent, several of the puddling furnaces still had their own individual chimneystacks, and were not connected by a boiler at all. Similarly several boilers of that cylindrical egg-ended type were used, and these were fired in coal. The Bloomfield works were in every way a typical 19th-century plant, and it is doubtful if they could have survived unaltered much longer'.

The Bloomfield Hall Colliery was closed on the 21st of January 1921 with the ending of working on the Thick Seam (HMSO 1929). This was subsequently replaced by the Brymill Steelworks. Which in turn was taken over by Tipton Bright Bar Firststeel Mill and Service Centre (Corus).

HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT OF THE STUDY AREA

The study area has long been associated with the production of iron. It is this continuation that characterises the development of the site.

Whilst the name Bloomfield may at first appear to be associated with the production of iron. It is, however, more likely that the area was named after Robert de Blomere who lived at Shrubbery Hall at Bloomfield in the 13th-century (Cockin 2000, 69). It is possible that the Bloomfield Ironworks were built on the site of a medieval iron-working mill associated with Robert de Blomere (Tipton Parish Records). If so, this would be one of the earliest iron-working mills in the Borough. However, there is no evidence for the exact location of this mill.

A smithy is recorded in the area in 1683 as 'Ye Bloom-Smythes' (Hackwood 2000, 155).

In 1776, (as seen in section 6) James Watt's first commercial steam engine was constructed for an ironworks/colliery in close proximity to, or in the study area (Dudley 1972, 115, Gale 1966, 30), the exact location of this is unknown.

The first map to show Tipton and Bloomfield in detail is Fowler's Map of Staffordshire, 1849 (Fig 7). This shows the extent of the works at this time. Joseph Hall's iron works at this time would have been well established. There are large works buildings to the south of the site, which is bound here by the canal. There are further buildings towards the centre of the site. There are residential/cottage industry buildings lined along Bloomfield Road. These may be associated with the site in the form of workers housing or ancillary industries.

By the first edition O.S. map in 1887 (Fig 8) it is obvious that the works had not expanded much since the previous map. Some buildings had been built to the east of centre of the site, while the London and North West Railway line had been constructed to the east with two sets of sidings providing access to the site. Tibbington Collieries can be clearly seen to the east of the study area. Brown Lion Street, which was named after a public house in the area, had been constructed to the north and forms the north boundary of the site. The canal had been extended northwards (basin) to give access to the centre of the site.

The second edition O.S. map (1904) (Fig 9) shows the study area as it was at the demise of Bloomfield Ironworks. The site was about to be sold and become Bloomfield Hall Colliery. There do not appear to have been any significant developments since 1887.

The 1919 O.S. map (Fig 10) shows the extent of the denudation and clearance of the site in order to accommodate the colliery. The Bloomfield Hall shafts are located to the south of the site where the main factory buildings once stood. The railway sidings to the east had been extended southwards to meet with the new colliery. The development along Bloomfield Road, and Brown Lion Street do not appear to have been affected by this clearance. There was an allotment garden in the northeast corner of the site. The canal extension/basin to the south, seen in 1887, had been filled in.

By 1938 (Fig 11) the Bloomfield Hall Colliery has been replaced by the Brymill Steel Works (Rolling Mills). There are two large mill/factory structures to the south of the site. The railway siding is connected to the most easterly of these, building I is part of this structure, whilst building C has been constructed by this time. There are a number of small structures to the west of this; these probably had an administrative function.

By 1967 (Fig 12) the canal to the south had been infilled, and the area to the southwest of this had been acquired by the firm. Engineering works buildings had been built here, including buildings J and L. Larger steelworks buildings have replaced the large structures in the south of the study area. The railway sidings were now gone. Buildings A, D, F, M, and N had been constructed. All of the development along Brown Lion Street and Bloomfield Road had been demolished. Building N had been constructed in the early years of World War Two. Buildings A (offices) and D (laboratory) were constructed in 1959 as part of the clearance of the old houses on Bloomfield Road (Plate 23).

Between 1967 and the present day the large steel mill buildings in the south half of the study area have been replaced yet again by buildings B and G. Buildings E, part of F, and K were built during this period.

The works were recently closed, and are now part of a proposed residential development.