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birmingham archaeology

Former John Carr Joinery Works,
Wellington Road,
Burton Upon Trent,
Staffordshire

Archaeological Watching Brief

UNIVERSITY OF BIRMINGHAM

REGISTERED IFA ORGANISATION

Former John Carr Joinery Works, Wellington Road, Burton Upon Trent, Staffordshire

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SUMMARY

Site Name: Former John Carr Joinery Works, Wellington Road, Burton Upon Trent, Staffordshire
NGR: NGR SK 237 299
Type: Watching brief
Date of fieldwork: 8/10/07 – 21/11/07
Planning Ref: PA/24878/010/PO
Client: Waterman CPM

In October/November 2007 an archaeological watching brief was undertaken by Birmingham Archaeology at the former John Carr Joinery Works, Wellington Road, Burton Upon Trent, Staffordshire on behalf of Waterman CPM during groundworks associated with the commercial development in this area.

Natural geology was identified at between 0.3 – 0.9m below the present ground surface. No archaeological features, structures, deposits or horizons were identified during the course of the groundworks. No artefactual material predating the modern period was recovered.

Former John Carr Joinery Works, Wellington Road, Burton Upon Trent, Staffordshire.
AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF, 2007.

1 INTRODUCTION

Between October and November 2007 Birmingham Archaeology carried out an archaeological watching brief on the former John Carr Joinery Works, Wellington Road, Burton Upon Trent, Staffordshire (hereafter referred to as the study area). The work was commissioned by Waterman CPM Limited on behalf of Revelan Group in advance of a proposed commercial development (Planning Reference PA/24878/010/PO).

This report outlines the results of the archaeological monitoring, which was carried out in accordance with a brief produced by East Staffordshire Borough Council and a WSI by Waterman CPM and which was approved by the Local Planning Authority prior to implementation, in accordance with guidelines laid down in Planning Policy Guidance Note 16 (DoE 1990). The project conformed to the Institute of Field Archaeologists Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Watching Briefs (IFA 1999).

2 LOCATION AND GEOLOGY

The town of Burton Upon Trent lies to the southwest of Derby and to the northeast of Lichfield (Fig 1). The site is located to the south west of Burton Upon Trent town centre between Wellington Road and the mainline railway and is centred on National Grid Reference NGR SK 237 299. The site is bounded by the Birmingham to Derby railway line to the east, Wellington Road to the west and Shobnall Road to the north. The southern site boundary includes a building currently occupied by Ferro-TI and Alloys Ltd and vacant land, which formerly belonged to Burton Albion Football Club (Fig 2).

The site occupies an area of unclassified urban geology on the soil survey of England and Wales (1983). However, it is clear from the soils mapped in the surrounding area that the town of Burton upon Trent lies on a mixture of different geology and soil types. These areas of differing geology include river alluvium overlain by stoneless clayey soils near to the River Trent to the east of the site, with river terrace and glaciofluvial drift, which is overlain by permeable fine and coarse loamy soils, recorded to the west of the site (SSEW 1983).

The present character of the site is formed of hard standing and rubble.

3 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

The principle aim of the watching brief was to record any archaeological features, structures, deposits, or horizons exposed during intrusive groundworks across the site.

More specific aims were to:

- To determine the extent, condition, nature, quality and date of any archaeological remains encountered.

- To establish the presence or absence of remains of the Roman road named Ryknild Street within the site.
- Record any evidence of any remains of the road discovered including evidence of its alignment, construction, materials and any phases of repair or reconstruction.
- Record any evidence of Roman activity forming part of the roadside environment.
- To preserve by record any important archaeological remains uncovered by the contractors operations, and to make these results readily available.

4 METHODOLOGY

Groundworks comprised the excavation of foundation trenches, service trenches and a balancing pond (Fig 3). 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. 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 and sections.

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). The paper archive will be deposited with the appropriate repository subject to permission from the landowner.

5 ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL CONTEXT

Previous archaeological investigations have included a desk-based assessment undertaken by WCPM for the current site area. Archaeological works within the wider area include several aerial photographic surveys undertaken in 1975 and a programme of archaeological investigation including geophysical survey, excavation of trial trenches and a watching brief undertaken by John Samuels Archaeological Consultant in 1997, approximately 0.8 kilometres to the southwest of the site (JSAC 1997).

The site itself is located within an area of significant archaeological remains. Archaeological finds recorded in the wider study area around the site include a Bronze Age flint tool found approximately 0.8 kilometres to the west of the site and a scatter of flint tools located 0.6 kilometres to the west, which included a Neolithic axe (HER 5513 and 1680).

Recent work to the southwest along the floodplain of the River Trent (at Catholme and the Where Rivers Meet Project) has identified extensive prehistoric remains, in particular settlement and ritual/burial sites and, in the case of Catholme, an extensive Anglo-Saxon settlement. Catholme is one of very few early medieval rural settlements in England to be excavated on a large scale, making it a site of national importance (Bain *et al* 2005). It is considered probable that these patterns of intense archaeological activity continue northward towards the development site.

Although only sporadic aerial photographs exist covering the development area, undated crop marks were identified to the west of the site on photographs from the early 1960s.

Two enclosures located approximately 0.8 kilometres to the south west of the site were identified in 1975 from features observed on aerial photographs. Although they were initially interpreted as prehistoric enclosures, the trial trenching undertaken in 1997 identified Romano-British pottery in the lower fill of one of the ditches excavated. Two other findspots of Roman date were recorded within the kilometre radius study area at some distance from the site (HERs 1619 and 4922).

The projected course of Ryknild Street Roman road lies to the northwest of the development site, with the road itself running from the Fosse Way at Bourton on the Water to Templeborough in South Yorkshire (Margary 1955).

The site lies outside the main area of the Medieval town and abbey of Burton Upon Trent, the nearest recorded medieval remains are those of upstanding earthwork remains of a medieval field system recorded 0.8 kilometres to the southwest and medieval burbage plots within the town, 0.6 kilometres to the northeast (HER 1410 and 5552). Towards the west of the site lies a moated medieval hall site (Sinai).

The Burton branch of the Trent and Mersey Canal was constructed immediately to the north of the site between 1770 and 1771 and ran along the course of Shobnall Road. The site is also in close proximity to several important sites associated with Burton's industrial heritage including the Albion Brewery and the Shobnall Brickworks and maltings.

The Ryknild Engine Company was founded on a site at Shobnall Road in 1903 to manufacture engines for steam powered cars. It folded in 1910. However, it was succeeded by Baguley Engineering Limited, which was established at Shobnall Road in 1912 to manufacture locomotives and railcars. This company also experimented with American steam powered tractors as part of the development of tanks during the First World War.

The Baguley Engineering Works are shown in the south east of the site on the third edition Ordnance Survey map of 1924 as a large industrial building served by rails running off the tracks in the northeast of the site. By 1937 these buildings had expanded in to the west of the site and were named as the Cyclops Engineering Works on the revised Ordnance Survey map. They were later divided between the joinery to the north and the Electric Furnace Company for which they were used as a spelting works.

Large sheds were constructed in the east and southernmost part of the site in the later 20th century. The joinery and spelting works were both disused by 1997, although some of the joinery buildings continued in use as individual storage and light industrial units up until 2006, when all the buildings on the site were demolished.

6 RESULTS

Groundworks were undertaken in three areas across the site. Within the existing balancing pond to the south of the site, natural geology consisting of yellow sandy gravel was identified at a depth of 0.3m below the current ground level. This was sealed by 0.2-0.3m of black topsoil that contained coal/charcoal industrial waste (Plate 1).

Towards the centre of the site a large foundation trench was excavated, with the earliest deposit identified being mixed brown/orange sandy clay, a probable redeposited natural subsoil, located at 0.85m in depth below the current ground level. This was overlain by 0.65m of crushed brick, sand, and clinker modern industrial deposits (Plate 2).

Pipe and drainage trenches were dug from the southeast to the northeast, with branches running west from the northern end of these trenches (Plate 3). Towards the southern end of these trenches, natural geology, consisting of yellow sand and gravel, was discovered at a depth of 0.3m below the current ground level. This was overlain by 0.3m of crushed brick. Towards the northern end of the trenches the stratigraphy was deeper, with natural geology, consisting of yellow sandy gravel located at 0.9m below the current ground level. This was sealed by 0.2m of brown silty clay which, in turn, was overlain by 0.5m of black clinker industrial waste. Overlying this was 0.2m of crushed brick demolition rubble (Plate 4).

7 CONCLUSION

Despite the potential of the development site, the watching brief identified no archaeological remains within the area. The suggested line of the Roman Road, Ryknild Street, showed no evidence of any Roman remains and as such it would appear that the likely location of the remains of this feature lie to the north of the site, outside the extents of the development area.

A series of modern levelling and demolition layers were encountered across the site, with these most likely associated with previous construction in the area (Baguley Engineering Works) and subsequent site clearance.

8 ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The project was commissioned by Waterman CPM Limited, on behalf of Revelan Group. Thanks are due to Ashford Construction for their co-operation and assistance throughout the project. Thanks are also due to Steve Toone (Ashford) and Ian Travers (Waterman CPM). Thanks also go to Steve Dean, who monitored the project on behalf of East Staffordshire Borough County Council. The fieldwork was undertaken by Mark Charles, Mary Duncan, Emily Hamilton, Erica Macey-Bracken, and Will Mitchell. Phil Mann produced the written report which was illustrated by Helen Moulden, and edited by Kevin Colls who managed the project for Birmingham Archaeology.

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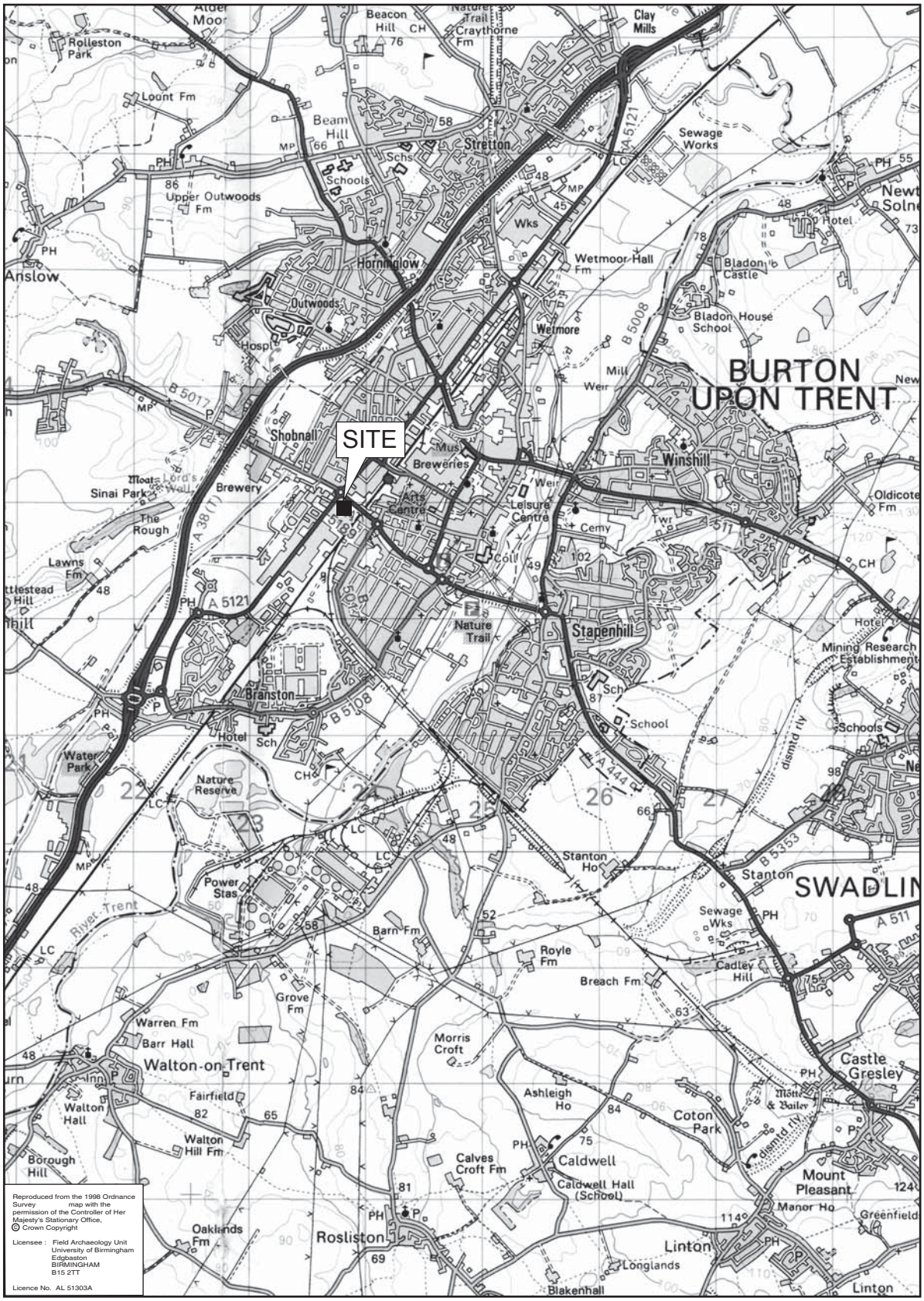

Fig.1

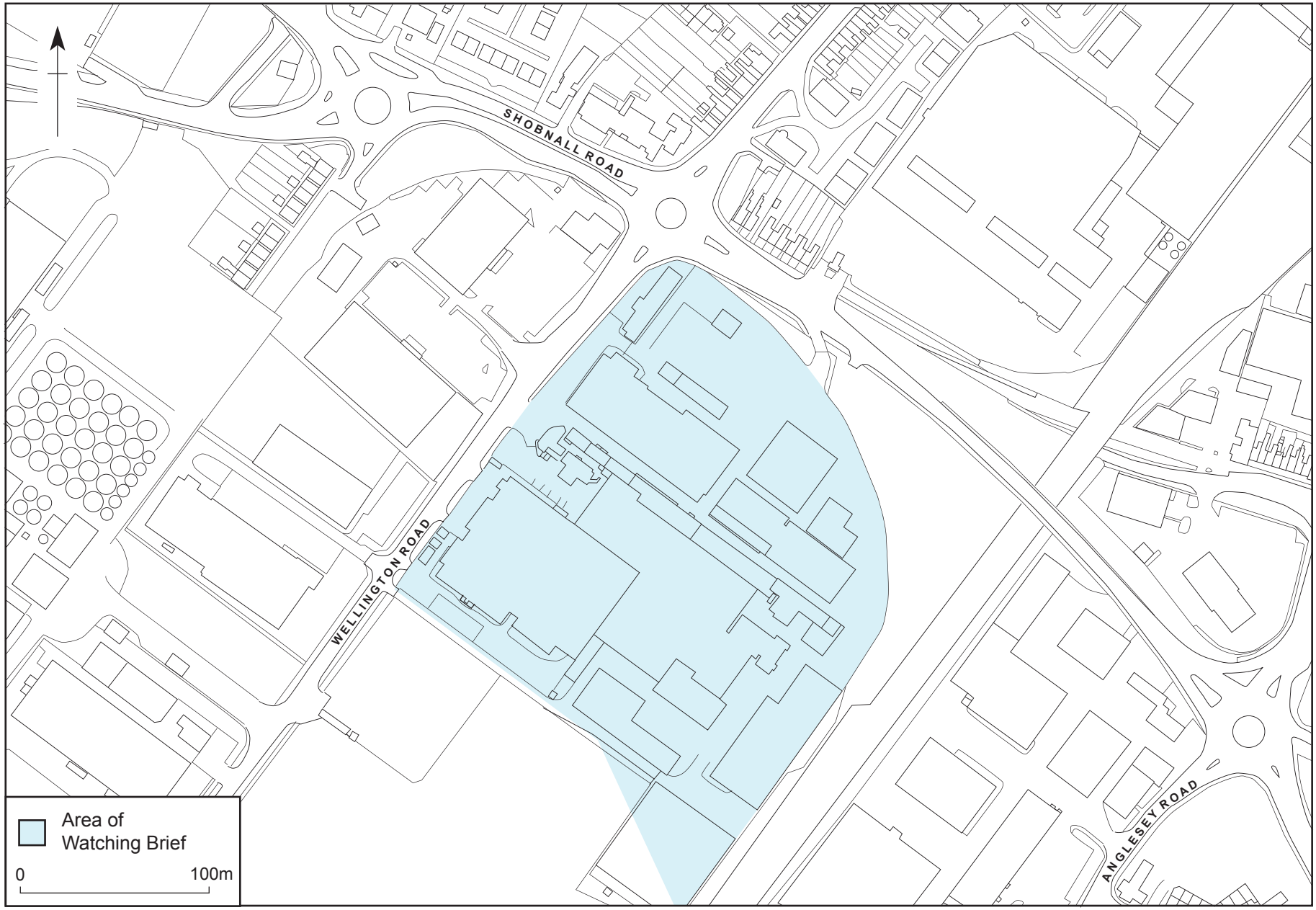
SHOBNALL ROAD
WELLINGTON ROAD
ANGLESEY ROAD
Area of
Watching Brief
0
100m

Fig.2

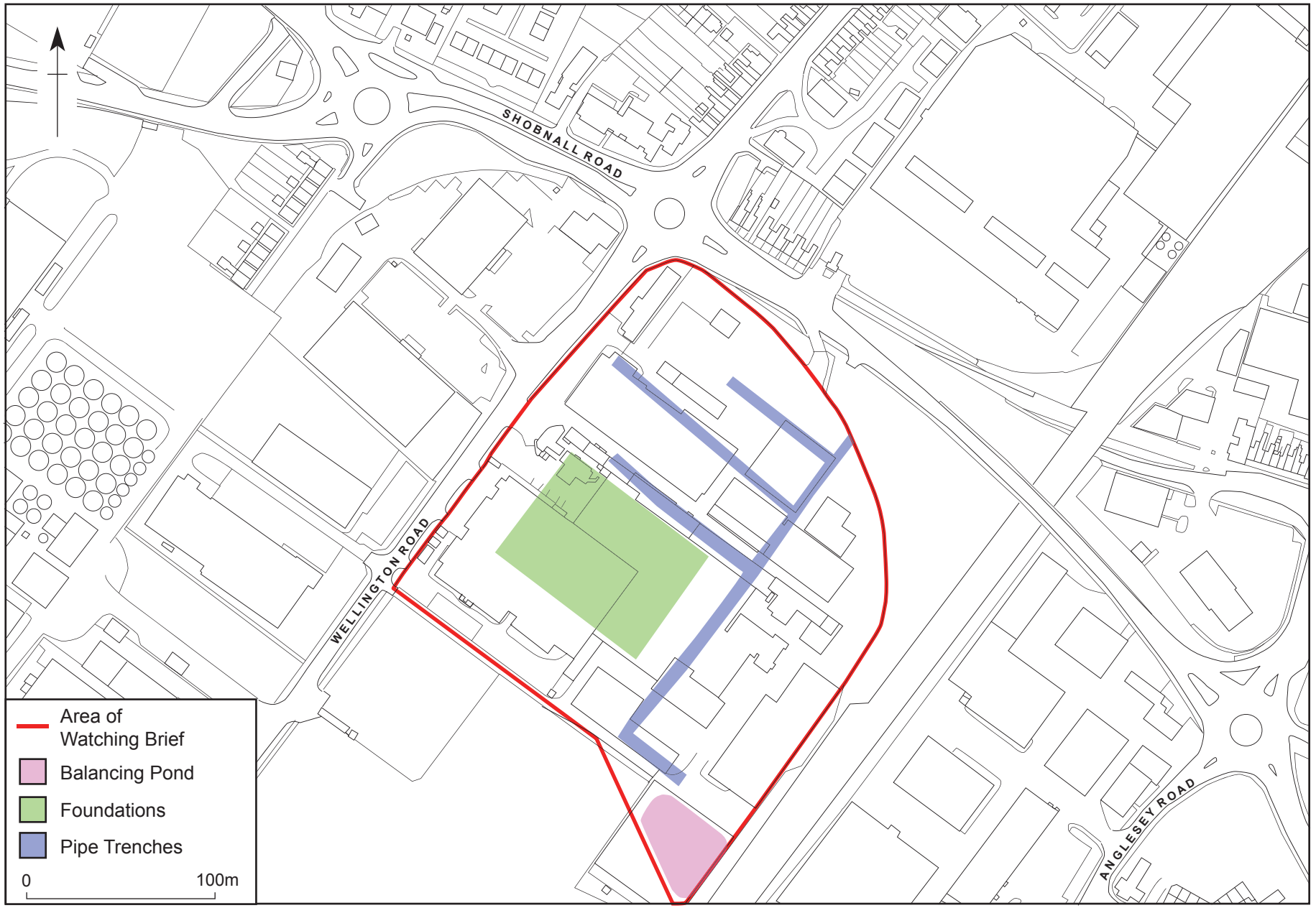
SHOBNALL ROAD
WELLINGTON ROAD
ANGLESEY ROAD
Area of Watching Brief
Balancing Pond
Foundations
Pipe Trenches
0
100m

Fig.3

Plate 1

Plate 2

Plate 3

Plate 4