

ST JAMES'S PRIORY,
DUDLEY

**ARCHAEOLOGICAL
EVALUATION**

Project No. 1989

11/2009

ST JAMES'S PRIORY, DUDLEY

West Midlands

ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION

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for

Dudley Metropolitan Borough Council

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ST JAMES'S PRIORY, DUDLEY

Archaeological Evaluation, 11/2009

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ST JAMES'S PRIORY, DUDLEY

Archaeological Evaluation, 11/2009

SUMMARY

Birmingham Archaeology was commissioned in November 2009 by Dudley Metropolitan Borough Council to undertake an archaeological evaluation in and around the partially upstanding ruins of St James's Priory, Dudley, West Midlands in respect of the proposed installation of floodlights and associated power cables, and the creation of a herb garden in the cloister garth. This Scheduled Ancient Monument (no 21613) is located in the southern corner of Priory Park, just outside Dudley town centre (centred on NGR SO9432 9085).

Seven hand-dug test pits were excavated along the proposed route of the electric cable, around and within the prior church. These were excavated to either a depth of 0.6m, the top of the archaeological horizon, or the natural subsoil. In addition, a machine-dug evaluation trench was excavated, under direct archaeological supervision, across the width of the cloister garth.

These excavations almost all revealed archaeological deposits relating to the construction, life and dissolution of the priory as well as evidence of the reuse of the site for industrial purposes after the Dissolution, and the incorporation of the ruins into the grounds of the 19th century Priory Hall, still standing to the north of the site.

Specifically, the evaluation located a 13th- to 14th-century posthole at the southwestern corner of the cloister walk; it is possible that this was part of a staircase leading to the first floor of the western range. The remains of the choir walls were demonstrated to survive as little as 0.1m below the modern ground surface.

Three possible grave cuts were located within two of the test pits, one of which had an in situ burial. Two of these were located on the southern side of the church, an area not thought to have been used by the priory. The other cut was towards the northern side of the crossing of the church, an expected location for a high status burial.

Remains of a brick-built structure were located in the cloister garth, part of the 18th-century use of the site for various small-scale industrial activities. Evidence of industry on the site was scattered throughout the stratigraphy, with slag and coal fragments frequently included. In the 19th century the priory ruins were incorporated into the grounds of Priory Hall, still standing. Evidence for the levelling of a swathe of land through the northern side of the structure and the cutting of a drive, was located in the evaluation trench and one of the test pits.

ST JAMES'S PRIORY DUDLEY

Archaeological Evaluation, 11/2009

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1.1. Birmingham Archaeology was commissioned by Dudley Metropolitan Borough Council to excavate seven test pits and one trial trench at the ruins of St James's Priory a scheduled ancient monument in Priory Park, Dudley, West Midlands (hereinafter referred to as the site). The work was undertaken between 9/11/09 and 13/11/09, in advance of the proposed installation of floodlights and associated electricity cables around the priory church, and the creation of a herb garden in the former cloister garth.
- 1.1.2. This report outlines the results of this field evaluation, which has been prepared in accordance with the Institute for Archaeologists' Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Evaluations (IfA 2008).
- 1.1.3. A desk-based assessment of Priory Park, including an assessment of the standing buildings and the potential below-ground archaeology was undertaken by Birmingham Archaeology in 2006 (Hislop 2006) in order to inform the preparation of a conservation plan for the park. The assessment highlighted that the ruins of St James' Priory, as a scheduled ancient monument, were already considered to be of national significance, and were important not only historically, and in themselves, but also as part of the current park and garden setting, one of the most extensive and well-preserved medieval landscapes in the West Midlands.
- 1.1.4. The priory and most of the surrounding undeveloped area, which includes earthworks of the pond and moat system, which once surrounded the priory, has been designated as a Scheduled Ancient Monument (SM 21613). The park, in which the priory stands, is also on the Register of Parks and Gardens of Special Historic Interest (Site Reference Number 5167).
- 1.1.5. An application for scheduled monument consent to carry out the work was sought and acquired from the Department for Culture, Media and Sport by Dudley Metropolitan Borough Council (Appendix 1). The evaluation adhered to the conditions laid down in this consent and a Written Scheme of Investigation (Appendix 2, Birmingham Archaeology 2009) which was approved prior to implementation, in accordance with the Ancient Monument and Archaeological Areas Act 1979 (as amended)-section 2.

2. LOCATION AND GEOLOGY

- 2.1.1. The site is located at the ruins of St James's Priory, within the grounds of Priory Park, Dudley, West Midlands and is centred on NGR SO9432 9085 (Fig. 1).
- 2.1.2. The underlying geology consists of an area of Westphalian middle coal measures, including shales, clays and fireclays with ironstone and marine bands dating to the Carboniferous period (Tyler and Ramsey 2008, 4). During excavation the natural subsoil was encountered in Trench 1 and Test Pits 2, 4, 5 and 7 and consisted of stiff yellow clay with a downwards sloping trench to the north.

- 2.1.3. The present character of the site is the partially upstanding ruins of St James's Priory, with a series of low interpretive walls denoting the putative extent of the priory buildings, and well tended lawn between these. The priory is located close to the southeastern corner of Priory Park, a recreational area close to Dudley town centre. The site of the priory ruin is ringed by footpaths.

3. ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

- 3.1.1. The desk-based assessment of Priory Park included an assessment of St James's Priory, and this will not be repeated in detail here. However, a brief summary of the evidence is required in order to understand and interpret the archaeological results of this evaluation.
- 3.1.2. The Priory, a Cluniac foundation, which was founded c 1161, as a daughter house of Wenlock Priory, was never a large community, housing no more than four or five residents (Hislop 2006, 2). During the 12th to 15th centuries the priory buildings were considerably expanded and remodelled, with several phases of major development being undertaken prior to 1540 when the priory was dissolved (*ibid.* 2-3).
- 3.1.3. During the following century, the structures seem to have fallen into a state of decay, and it seems probable things might have carried on thus had not several different industrial processors and manufacturers moved onto the priory lands from at least the 18th century (*ibid* 3).
- 3.1.4. The priory was surrounded by a moat, or series of interconnecting ponds, and it is probable that the industry was utilising these water courses for power (*ibid*). Parts of the priory structure were certainly converted into a dwelling on the southeastern side of the church, while a small complex of industrial buildings occupied what was once the cloister (*ibid*).
- 3.1.5. In 1825 the priory site was again modified, Priory Hall was built to the northwest of the site and the ruins of the abbey were incorporated into the park grounds (Hislop 2006 5). The industrial workshops occupying the ruin were demolished and the driveway approach to the hall routed through the ruins (*ibid* 3 and 5). By this point the ponds and moat surrounding the priory had been filled or drained (*ibid*).
- 3.1.6. In 1926 the priory was bought by Dudley Corporation and subsequently incorporated into the public park within which it presently remains (Hislop 2006 4). In 1939 some archaeological investigations were carried out on the ruins which resulted in a putative ground plan being laid out on the ground as it is today. Since then some small-scale archaeological investigations have taken place in the vicinity of the priory, but little is known for sure about the archaeological deposits on this site (Birmingham Archaeology 2009 2).

4. AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

- 4.1.1. The objective of the archaeological work, as stated in the Written Scheme of Investigation (Birmingham Archaeology 2009, Appendix 2) was to obtain a record of significant surviving remains and to record their levels, extent, date and character.
- 4.1.2. This evaluation was designed to widen our knowledge of the surviving remains with a view to preservation of any *in situ* archaeology, but also to assess the impacts of

the proposed development on the archaeological remains, and to help formulate a future mitigation strategy.

5. METHODOLOGY

- 5.1.1. A total of seven hand dug test pits were excavated along the proposed line of the electricity cable.
- Two test pits measuring 2m x 1m each across the lines of the north and south walls of the choir in order to investigate the stratigraphy on both sides as well as the wall construction.
 - Five test pits measuring 1m x 1m, two on the southern side of the church, one on the west, one within the crossing and one in the north transept.
- 5.1.2. These test pits were excavated to the uppermost archaeological horizon or a depth of 0.6m.
- 5.1.3. The evaluation trench, measuring 21m long and 1m wide, was excavated within the cloister garth. All topsoil and modern overburden was removed using a 360° tracked mechanical excavator with a toothless ditching bucket, under direct archaeological supervision, down to the top of the uppermost archaeological horizon or the subsoil. Subsequent cleaning and excavation was by hand. A representative sample of archaeological features and deposits were manually sample excavated. This was done to sufficiently define their character and to obtain suitable dating evidence using the following strategy;
- Sectioning and 50% excavation of all contained features
 - 20% excavation of linear features, or to the degree required to understand their character.
- 5.1.4. Archaeological deposits were not completely excavated unless it was deemed unavoidable. The depth of archaeological deposits across the site was assessed, although the full area of every test pit and trench was not necessarily excavated down to natural. All stratigraphic sequences were recorded, even where no archaeology was present. Features were planned at a scale of 1:20 and sections drawn of all cut features and significant vertical stratigraphy at a scale of 1:10 or 1:20. A comprehensive written record was maintained using a continuous numbered context system on *pro-forma* cards. Written records and scale plans were supplemented by photographs using black and white monochrome, colour slide and digital photography. Recovered finds were cleaned, marked and remedial conservation work undertaken as necessary. Treatment of all finds conformed to guidance contained within the Birmingham Archaeology Fieldwork Manual and *First Aid for Finds* (Watkinson and Neal 1998).
- 5.1.5. Lifting of human skeletal remains was kept to the minimum compatible with an adequate evaluation. Burials were recorded *in situ* but were not lifted. Excavation of human remains confirmed with advice provided in *Church Archaeology: its care and management* (Council for the Care of Churches 1999), *Human bones from Archaeological Sites* (English Heritage 2004) and in *Guidance for best practice for treatment of human remains excavated from Christian burial grounds in England* (English Heritage 2005).
- 5.1.6. 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.

6. RESULTS

6.1. Introduction

6.1.1. Detailed summaries of the individual trenches are presented in Appendix 3 and full details are available in the project archive. The following section is arranged in trench order, and both feature (cut) and context numbers are highlighted in bold. A representative selection of trench plans and sections are illustrated.

6.2. Trench 1

6.2.1. The natural subsoil (**111**) was reached at a height of 177.72m AOD at the northeastern end and 178.20m AOD at the southwestern end of Trench 1, it consisted of compact yellow clay, although the sand content of this material seemed to increase towards the southwestern end of the trench

6.2.2. At the southwestern end of the trench was a posthole (**100** Fig 3), the full extent of which was not revealed in the trench. This was oval in plan measuring 0.3m wide and 0.4m long, and was excavated to a depth of 0.18m (0.42m below the modern ground surface). The posthole was filled by **101**, which consisted of light grey sandy silt with stone throughout; three sherds of medieval pottery dating to the 13th to 14th century were recovered from it. Excavation ceased at this level due to obstruction by a large piece of sandstone, possible post-packing material, which was left *in situ*. The posthole was sealed by a layer (**106**) of grey sandy silt, rich in stone, with a maximum depth of 0.18m (getting shallower towards the southwest). This layer was only evident at the southwestern end of the trench.

6.2.3. Layer **106** had been cut by the southwestern edge of a cut feature, **102**. This was not fully exposed within the trench, but was 1.1m long, 0.6m wide and excavated to a depth of 0.24m (0.5m below the modern ground surface). The cut was aligned east – west, parallel to the line of the cloister wall, and the fill (**103**) consisted of loose dark grey humic sandy silt, from which pottery dating to the 17th to 18th century was recovered. This, and much of the southwestern end of the trench was sealed by a layer (**105**) up to 0.34m deep, consisting of dark brown soil rich silt, sand and clay abundant in coal, slag, and stone.

6.2.4. Towards the northeastern end of the trench, the remains of a structure (**108**) were revealed. This was constructed of red, hand-made bricks (9" x 4" x 2½") bonded with lime mortar, and comprised part lengths of the south and east walls. On the southwestern edge of the structure a foundation cut (**112**) for this was evident in plan only. The construction trench backfill consisted of rubble-rich sandy silt on the southern side of the structure (**113**), in contrast to clean off-white sand, which filled the construction cut on the eastern side of the structure (**110**). No finds were recovered from these deposits. The interior of the structure was filled by brick and mortar rubble (**109**) which also covered the wall foundations to a depth of up to 0.5m and extended to the northwest of the structure for a further 2.1m. At the northeastern end of the trench demolition layer **109** overlay a soil rich layer **105**.

6.2.5. The structure and its associated demolition layer were cut on the southwestern side by **114**, a holloway exposed for a length of 0.1m, it was 4m wide and excavated to a maximum depth of 0.6m. This feature was filled by **107**, a mix of slag and stone with some sandy silt, topped by chipped stone.

6.2.6. All the above features and deposits were sealed by a layer of turf with a well-developed topsoil (**104**) up to 0.18m in depth.

6.3. Test Pit 2 (North transept)

6.3.1. The natural subsoil (**202**) was encountered at a height of 178.38m AOD, 0.26m below the modern ground surface. This consisted of compact yellow clay.

6.3.2. This was overlaid by a 0.13m deep layer (**201**) of brown sandy silt with some stone fragments, forming an interface layer between the natural clay and overlying topsoil, which consisted of a layer (**200**) 0.15m thick.

6.4. Test Pit 3 (North wall of choir)

6.4.1. The test pit was excavated to a depth of 178.36m AOD, 0.6m below the modern ground surface; the natural subsoil was not encountered.

6.4.2. The earliest feature was a stone built wall (**303**), which was encountered at a depth of 0.15m below the modern ground surface and exposed for a length of 1m orientated east – west across the width of the test pit. It was exposed to a width of 1m and a height of 0.36m, and was constructed with rough-cut limestone blocks on the south face, containing a limestone rubble core, cemented in place with a yellow-beige coloured mortar. The northern side of the wall had been destroyed, cut away by **307**, a large cut feature exposed for a width of 1.3m and a depth of 0.3m, the southern edge of the putative holloway, identified in Trench 1. This was filled with loose stone rubble with some dark grey silt (**306**).

6.4.3. On the southern side of wall **303** was the upper 0.12m of a layer (**302**) of brown silt and clay with stone and mortar rubble throughout. This was build-up of a demolition layer against the southern side of the wall. Over this and **306** was a layer (**301**) of stone and mortar or plaster demolition rubble up to 0.36m deep. Pottery from this dated to the late 18th to early 19th century. Layer 301 had been cut by **304** and **305**, a pair of concrete slabs, each mortared into a rubble bedding layer to mark the hypothetical edges of the priory wall. These and the entire area of the trench were sealed by a layer of turf and topsoil 0.15m deep.

6.5. Test Pit 4 (West of nave)

6.5.1. The test pit was excavated to a depth of 178.64m AOD (0.32m below the modern ground level); the natural subsoil was not encountered in this test pit.

6.5.2. The excavation revealed the upper surface of a compact stone rubble structure, or layer (**405**). This was sealed, on the eastern side of the test pit, by a narrow 0.06m deep layer (**404**) of beige sand and crushed sandstone, and, on the western side of the test pit, by a narrow layer (**403**), also 0.06m deep, of black silt and soil with gravel. Sealing the above was a 0.02m deep layer (**402**) of crushed brick and tile forming a rudimentary surface. Sealing this was a 0.12m thick layer (**401**) consisting of loose, black silt and gravel. Pottery from this layer dated to the early

19th century. Overlying this was a 0.1m deep layer of turf and topsoil (**400**), containing pottery of the mid-18th to early 19th century.

6.6. Test Pit 5 (Crossing)

- 6.6.1. The natural subsoil (**505**) was encountered at 178.79m AOD (0.33m below the modern ground surface). This consisted of compact yellow clay.
- 6.6.2. The natural had been cut on the north and east sides of the test pit by **504**, a feature that prior to excavation appeared to be 'L'-shaped in plan with only the southern and western edge of the feature located within the test pit. The southern arm was fully excavated and was 0.22m deep (0.54m below the modern ground surface) with a relatively irregular profile, whereas the northern arm was excavated to a maximum depth of 0.28m (0.6m below the modern ground surface) and this had a vertical southern edge that continued along the width of the trench. Cut **504** was filled by compacted light brown sandy silt with stone rubble and lenses of natural clay throughout (**503**). A small piece of lead was the only find recovered from this fill. It is possible that this feature represents a grave cut, whether it had been disturbed or not cannot be ascertained.
- 6.6.3. The above features were seal by a layer (**502**), 0.1m deep, of beige sandy silt with crushed plaster or mortar and stone rubble, with very occasional tile fragments throughout. This was in turn overlaid by **501**, a layer 0.1m deep of soil rich sand and silt with some rubble, charcoal and glass fragments throughout. Pottery from this dated to the 17th to 18th century. Layer **501** was in turn overlaid by **500**, a layer of turf and well developed topsoil 0.12m deep.

6.7. Test Pit 6 (South wall of choir)

- 6.7.1. This test pit was excavated to a maximum depth of 179.01m AOD (0.32m below the modern ground surface at the south end of the test pit). The natural subsoil was not encountered in the course of this excavation.
- 6.7.2. The earliest feature was **611**, a lower course of sandstone foundation forming part of the buttress for the upstanding wall on the western side of the test pit. The majority of the lower courses of this wall ran beneath the later structure **602** (described below), and mortar, presumably from the construction of **602**, was evident in places. **611** was exposed for a length of 0.3m, width of 0.12m and height of 0.15m to the south of **602**.
- 6.7.3. **602** represents the remains of a wall, orientated east to west, measuring 1.36m in width and exposed for a length of 1m and height of 0.2m. This was constructed of limestone (in contrast to the sandstone construction of **611**) with rough-cut facing stones (3 courses), visible only on the southern face of the wall, and a rubble and yellow-cream coloured mortar core. A layer (**609**) rich in stone rubble butted up to the southern face of this wall. Similarly, to the north of wall **602** layer **601**, a rubble and mortar rich layer survived a similar level to the top of **609**, although the relationship with wall **602** could not be established. These layers were left *in situ*. **609** was overlaid by a 0.1m deep layer (**604**) of brown-grey silt and sand with stone, mortar and tile rubble. This was overlaid by a deposit (**603**) of compact yellow clay (re-deposited natural) with charcoal throughout.
- 6.7.4. At the south end of the trench was a probable stone structure (**608**). The scope of test pit was too narrow to fully explore the nature of this structure, but it constituted three large slabs of limestone with a square void between them at the

southeast corner of the test pit. This void was 0.2m square and excavated to a depth of 0.18m and had silted up with sand, silt and some stone rubble (**610**).

- 6.7.5. Sections of a pair of low sandstone walls (**606** and **607**) were located within the test pit. To the north, **606** was constructed on the top of wall **602** and consisted of a shallow crushed stone and mortar bedding/foundation layer with a single course of sandstone blocks (around 0.8m x 0.28m x 0.22m). The sandstone had a chamfer on the northern side. Towards the south of the trench **607** had a similar construction (although the sandstone had no chamfer) and seemed to have been built over structure **608**. These walls were raised above ground level and were intended to illustrate the supposed location of the original priory walls.
- 6.7.6. Abutting the southern side of wall 606 was the concrete base for a fence post (**605**), part of a fence that surrounded some of the eastern structure of the church. Overlying this and the entire area of the trench was a layer of topsoil and turf (**600**) 0.12m deep. Pottery from this dated to the mid 18th to early 19th century.

6.8. Test Pit 7 (West of south transept)

- 6.8.1. The natural subsoil (**706**) was encountered at 177.96m AOD at the south, and 177.86m AOD at the north end of the test pit. This consisted of compact yellow clay.
- 6.8.2. Overlying this was a layer (**704**) up to 0.14m deep of brown sandy silt with some stones throughout. This, and the natural, had been cut by two cut features (**705** and **708**). On the northern side of the test pit **705** represents an undisturbed grave cut. Only part of the southern edge of this was within the excavated area and had dimensions of 0.95m in length and 0.3m in width before running beneath the limit of the excavation. **705**, which was excavated to a depth of 0.28m (0.5m below the modern ground surface), had a rounded edge and a northeast-southwest alignment. Two human bones were located at the extent of excavation, probably part of a wrist, these were recorded and reburied. Fill **703** of grave **705** consisted of grey sandy silt with stone rubble and natural clay lenses, suggesting rapid back-filling.
- 6.8.3. On the southern side of the test pit, the northeastern end of a similarly aligned probable grave cut was located, and excavated to a depth of 0.16m (0.4m below the modern ground surface (Fig 5). Although no human remains were identified in the fill of this feature (**707**), it was not fully excavated due to the confined nature of the test pit.
- 6.8.4. These features were sealed by **702**, a layer 0.08m deep of crushed, or broken stone rubble, with some silt and clay. This was in turn overlaid by a narrow layer (**701**) 0.03m thick of coal, slag and other industrial-looking waste. Pottery from this dated to the mid 18th to early 19th century. Layer 701 was sealed by a layer (**700**) of turf and topsoil 0.12m deep.

6.9. Test Pit 8 (southeast of the southeast chapel)

- 6.9.1. This test pit was excavated to a depth of 178.59m AOD (0.6m below the modern ground surface. The natural subsoil was not encountered in this test pit.
- 6.9.2. The earliest deposit encountered was a layer (**802**), of which the upper 0.16m was excavated, that consisted of black soil-rich sandy silt with coal, slag and stone building rubble throughout. This was sealed by **801** a layer 0.3m of crushed stone

and mortar, or plaster rubble, with some tile, slag and glass fragments throughout. Pottery from this deposit dated to the late 18th century. This was sealed by a layer (**800**) of turf and topsoil 0.15m deep.

7. THE FINDS

7.1. The pottery by Emma V S Collins

7.1.1. The pottery formed a small assemblage consisting of a total of 86 sherds weighting 613g. The majority of sherds dated to the post-medieval period, however, there were four dating to the medieval period from contexts **101** and **603**. Nine dated to the 'transitional period' between medieval and post-medieval, 15th – 16th century. A summary of all of the pottery types and dated ranges is in Appendix 4.

Context	Count	Weight	Spot date
101	3	7	13thC - 14thC
103	2	44	17thC - 18thC
301	47	331	Late 18thC - Early 19thC
400	1	3	mid 18thC - early 19thC
401	12	47	Early 19thC
501	4	8	17thC - 18thC
600	1	<1	mid 18thC - early 19thC
603	1	3	11thC - 12thC
701	1	2	mid 18thC - early 19thC
801	14	168	Late 18thC

Table 1: Pottery Spot dates

7.2. Other finds by Emma V S Collins , edited by Erica Macey-Bracken

7.2.1. A small but varied finds assemblage was recovered from the excavation. These were processed and assessed and are quantified in Table 2.

Material	Count	Weight
Tile	10	435
Fired clay	1	8
Clay pipe	3	3
Stone	1	66
Glass	25	322
Iron	8	135
Lead	1	7
other metal	1	6
Slag	3	28
Animal bone		97
Human bone	1	13

Table 2: Other finds quantification

7.2.2. Three fragments of flat plain roof tile were recovered (**301, 400, 401**), along with one piece of plain floor tile with some mortar adhering to the underside (**603**). **601** contained six fragments of two glazed floor tiles, one with a pattern which is

possibly one of a series forming a large pattern or picture. One lump of fired clay/daub was present (**703**).

- 7.2.3. Clay pipe was found in three contexts (**200, 301, 801**). Four fragments of stem were found as were two bowl fragments from **801**.
- 7.2.4. Iron objects was found in three contexts: **301** contained four nails, **200** contained two objects, one rectangular and the other a bottle opener head, and **402** contained two unidentifiable objects, one fairly linear and the other rounded. A flat strip of lead was found from **503** and **701** contained a 1964 'three penny bit'.
- 7.2.5. A small rounded piece of worked stone, possibly a weight was found in **701**.
- 7.2.6. A fragment of glass slag (**400**) and two pieces of slag (or possibly vitrified clay) (**301**) were identified.
- 7.2.7. The bone assemblage seemed to be focused on larger domestic animals such as cow and sheep. Several teeth, a piece of femur and a rib fragment were present. **301** contained a fragment of possible human cranium.
- 7.2.8. Brown and colourless glass bottle fragments were also recovered. A small piece of green bottle glass (600), of very modern appearance is probably intrusive. A quantity of scratched and crushed glass fragments was also found (**501, 600, 301, 701**); old glass was often ground down and used to polish steel, and it is known that steel processing was carried out in the area of the site (M Duncan, *pers comm*). **801** contained three fragments of colourless decorative glass and **301** contained one piece of flat blue glass and a curved hollow tube decorated with a swirled white line.

8. DISCUSSION

- 8.1.1. The archaeological deposits encountered during the evaluation are dominated by the priory buildings, their monastic use, later incorporation into small-scale industrial units, and subsequent inclusion, as ruins, into the formal gardens of Priory Hall. Although the priory itself has seen much modification over its lifetime, surprisingly good preservation of below ground archaeological features and deposits was identified over much of the site at a shallow depth.
- 8.1.2. The only secure medieval deposit was **100** located at the southwestern end of Trench 1. This 13th-14th century stone-packed posthole was located in the southwest corner of the cloister walk. It is suggested that this may have been part of a structure for a staircase running from the western side of a doorway into the nave of the church up to the upper floor of the western range (further evidence includes a door lintel above head height surviving in the upstanding ruins (John Hemmingway *pers comm*). The date of the pottery would certainly tie with the 13th century date of the construction of parts of the nave and the western range (Hislop 2006, Fig 3).
- 8.1.3. Other features of probable medieval date relating to the priory are the grave cuts in Test Pit 7 (**705** and **706**) on the southern side of church and a possible grave cut in Test Pit 5 (**504**). No datable evidence was recovered from the fills of these features although the nature, compaction and consistency of the fills suggest rapid backfilling. Only grave **705** had *in situ* human bones identified within the area of excavation (a wrist bone with articulated radius. It is probable that both of these represent *in situ* medieval burials. Their slight misalignment with the standing

southern wall of the nave could suggest that these burials predate the 13th century construction of this part of the priory. Perhaps they relate to the 12th century southern transept, which is also not aligned with the rest of the priory structures? If these graves were dug around the 12th century, then this also suggests that the layer through which they had been cut (**704**), rich in stone rubble, could relate to an early stone construction phase, illustrating that pre- and early monastic deposits could potentially survive at a shallow level. The cut within the church building (**504**) seems also likely to be a grave. Radford carried out some archaeological investigations in 1939 (Radford 1939), and the plan produced by this work does illustrate a grave within the church choir, however, this is well north of the location of Test Pit 5.

- 8.1.4. Some structural elements of the priory buildings were investigated in the evaluation trench and several of the test pits. Certainly the wall structures located in these test pits relate to the priory building. In Test Pit 3 the northern wall of the church (**303**) was found to have been truncated to at least a depth of 0.6m below the modern ground surface, the southern part of the wall, including the facing stones survived at 0.15m below current ground level. Deposits on the southern side of this wall (inside the church), seemed to consist of demolition rubble built up against the wall. The original floor level was not encountered. The wall on the southern side of the church (**602**) was investigated in Test Pit 6 where it survived 0.1m below the modern ground surface, and was found to be of similar construction to **303**. It is of note that modern 'walls' located over the medieval structures to indicate their locations (**304**, **305**, **603** and **607**) seem to be inaccurately placed.
- 8.1.5. Unexpectedly, stone structures were also located in Test Pit 4, and at the southern end of Test Pit 6 (**608**). The former appears to have been a metalled surface but, interpretation of the latter has been hampered by the limited area of excavation.
- 8.1.6. At the southwestern end of Trench 1 was a cut feature parallel to the inner cloister walk wall (**102**), and apparently related to the cloister structure. The pottery from the fill of this cut (**103**) dates from the 17th to 18th century, maybe suggesting that this could either be a robber trench, or part of a construction/reconstruction relating to the use of the site for small-scale industrial activity in the 18th century. The brick-built structure located towards the northeastern end of Trench 1 (**108**) was presumably also part of the industrial complex located on the site here.
- 8.1.7. These works were levelled in 1825 as part of the landscaping of the grounds of Priory Hall (Hislop 2006 3). Certainly by 1840, the Tithe map illustrates a meandering driveway to Priory Hall through the middle of the ruins. This was excavated in Trench 1 and Test Pit 3, confirming the exact route of the drive, and also illustrating how deeply cut through the standing structures it was. The base of this, or the original surface was beyond the scope of this work, however, in Trench 1 the cutting was filled with slag and chipped stone, suggesting that, at this point, the surface may have been raised, at a later date, possibly due to wet conditions. The moat and/or ponds had been filled or drained by this point, but the site was presumably liable to flooding. Test Pit 8 to the east of the priory, was the only test of the back-filled water features, however, 0.6m of excavation was not deep enough to reach any alluvial silting or waterlogged deposits.
- 8.1.8. A certain amount of truncation of stratigraphy was evident over the majority of the site, although there was a marked difference in level in specific areas. This seems to apply to the cloister garth, and in Test Pit 2, within the northern transept, both the stratigraphy and the position of this truncation suggests that this took place around 1825 when the grounds of Priory Hall were landscaped, rather than at a later date.

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Appendix 3

Context Summary

Context	Keyword	Associated number	Summary
Trench 1			
100	Cut	101	Cut of posthole
101	Fill	100	Fill of posthole
102	Cut	102	Linear cut, possibly robber trench
103	Fill		Backfill of 102
104	Layer		Topsoil and turf
105	Layer		Soil rich layer
106	Layer		Grey, silt and sand, stone, demolition rubble layer
107	Structure	114	Build of road/Holloway fill
108	Structure	112	Brick-built structure
109	Layer	108	Brick and mortar demolition rubble
110	Fill	112	Probable construction backfill
111	Layer		Natural subsoil
112	Cut	108 110 113 109	Construction cut for structure 108
113	Fill	112	Construction backfill of 112
114	Cut	107	Cut for Holloway
Test Pit 2			
200	Layer		Turf and topsoil
201	Layer		Natural subsoil
Test Pit 3			
300	Layer		Topsoil and Turf
301	Layer		Demolition layer with stone rubble and mortar
302	Layer		Layer of silt and clay with stone (rubble?) throughout
303	Structure		East-West aligned limestone built wall, rough-cut facing stones with rubble core.
304	Structure	305	Interpretive wall, concrete slab set in rubble
305	Structure	304	Interpretive wall, concrete slab set in rubble
306	Layer		Layer of dark grey silt with loose stone rubble
Test Pit 4			
400	Layer		Topsoil and turf
401	Layer		Black gravel and silt layer
402	Layer		Layer of crushed CBM (surface?)
403	Layer		Layer of black silt and soil
404	Layer		Layer of sand and crushed sandstone
405	Structure		Stone structure floor surface of wall
Test Pit 5			
500	Layer		Topsoil and Turf
501	Layer		Layer of dark brown soil and silt with rubble through-out
502	Layer		Layer rich in stone and mortar demolition rubble
503	Fill	504	Fill of 504, sand and silt with stone throughout and natural clay lenses
504	Cut	503	Negative feature, possibly grave cut
505	Natural		Natural subsoil
Test Pit 6			
600	Layer		Topsoil and turf
601	Layer		Beige sandy silt with stone and mortar rubble

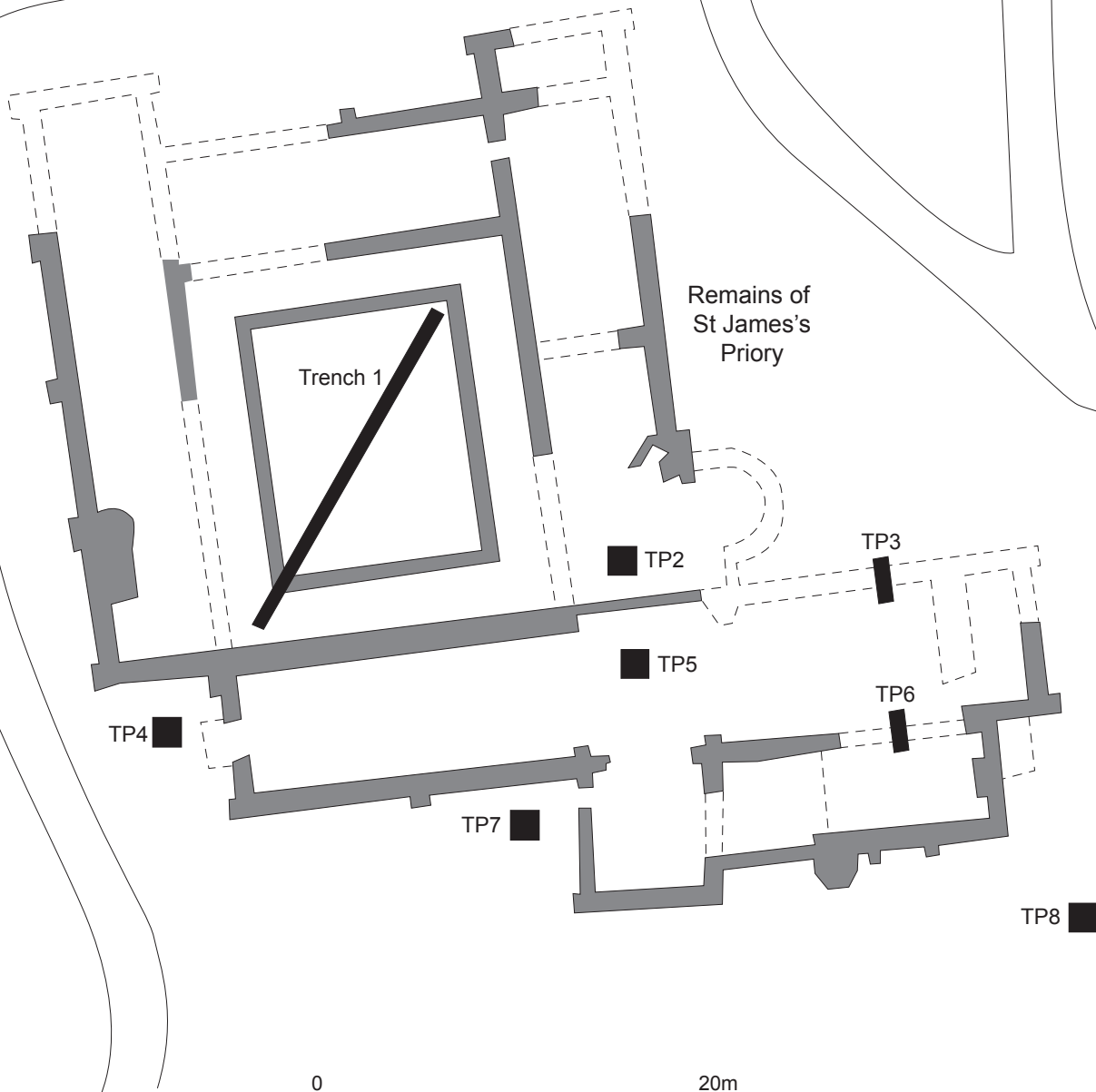
602	Structure		East-west aligned limestone wall with rough-cut facing stones and rubble core
603	Layer		Lens/localised layer of yellow clay with charcoal and sand throughout
604	Layer		Stone and mortar demolition layer with silt
605	Structure		Concrete post foundation
606	Structure		Interpretation wall, sandstone
607	Structure		Interpretation wall, sandstone
608	Structure		Stone structure (floor/wall/collapse?)
609	Layer		Rubble demolition layer with stone and mortar
610	Fill/Layer		Possible fill of post hole? In 608
611	Structure		Lower courses exposed of standing wall to west of test pit, sandstone
Test Pit 7			
700	Layer		Topsoil and Turf
701	Layer		Narrow deposit of coal, and slag
702	Layer		Layer of silt with stone (rubble) throughout
703	Fill	705	Fill of 705, with <i>in situ</i> bones
704	Layer		Layer of sandy silt with stone (rubble) throughout
705	Cut	703	Cut, southern edge of grave
706	Layer		Natural subsoil
707	Fill	708	Lower fill of possible grave, light grey silt
708	Cut	707 709	Possible grave cut, northern edge
709	Fill	708	Upper fill of grave cut, stone rubble and silt
Test Pit 8			
800	Layer		Topsoil and turf
801	Layer		Layer of demolition rubble (stone and mortar)with some silt
802	Layer		Black soil with coal, slag and rubble

Appendix 4

Pottery Types and Date Range

Cntxt	Sandyware	Iron poor medieval ware	Late Medieval Oxidised ware	Cistercian ware	Yellowware	Blackware	Coarseware	Slip-coated ware	Mottledware	White salt-glazed stoneware	Brown salt-glazed stoneware	Creamware	Pearlware	Encrusted ware	Blue+White transfer print	Yellow glazed earthenware	Industrial Slipware	Earliest	Latest
101		3																13th-14th	
103							2											17thC - 18thC	-
301			1	8	1	6	7	4	1		1	8	7		1	1		15thC - 16thC	19thC - 20thC
400												1						mid 18thC - early 19thC	-
401						2	2					4	2	1			1	17thC - 18thC	19thC
501						3		1										17thC - 18thC	-
600												1						mid 18thC - early 19thC	-
603	1																	11thC - 12thC	-
701												1						mid 18thC - early 19thC	-
801						1	2	4		1		4			2			17thC - 18thC	late 18thC - mid 19thC
Total	1	3	1	8	1	12	13	9	1	1	1	19	9	1	3	1	1		

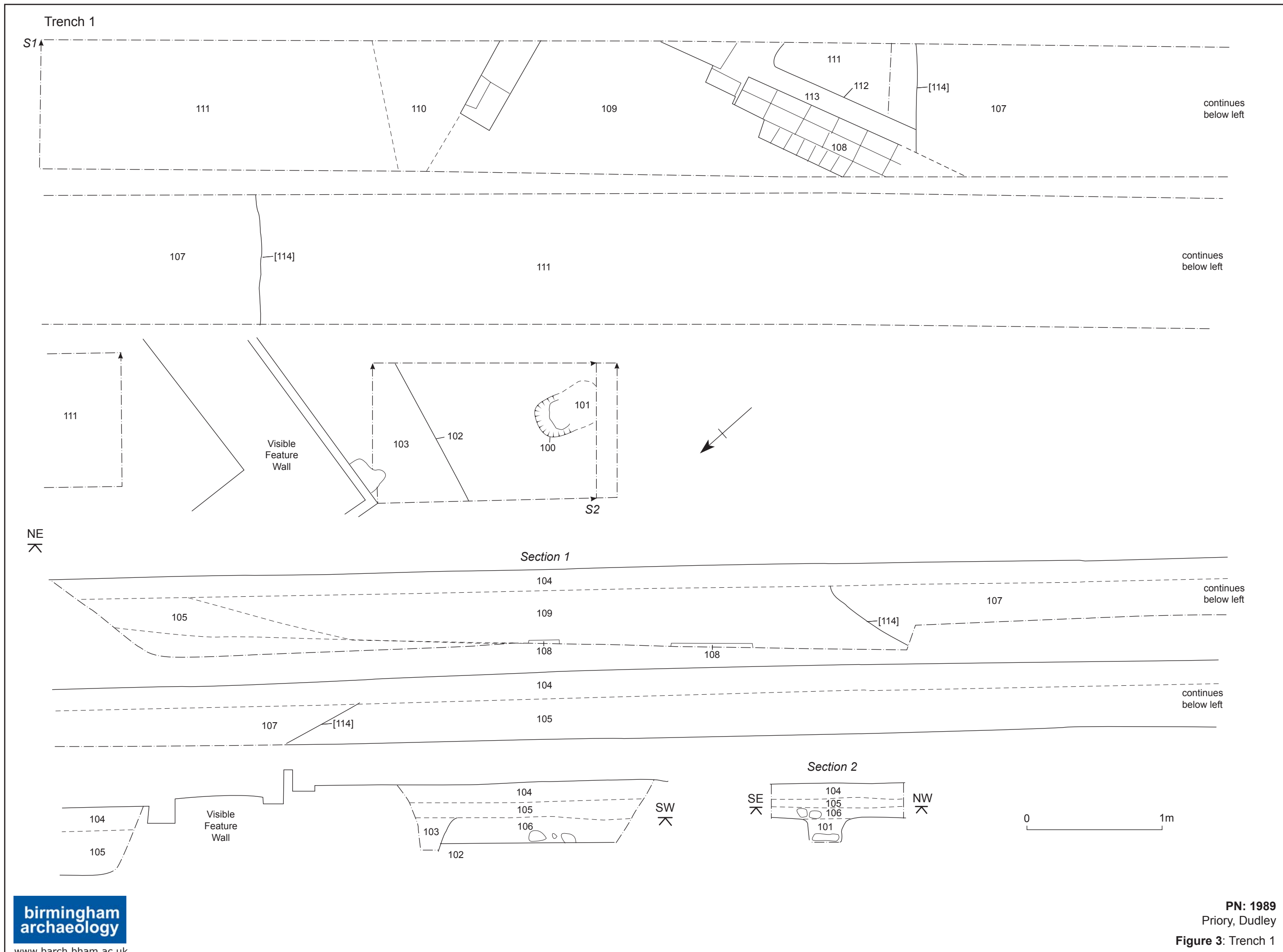


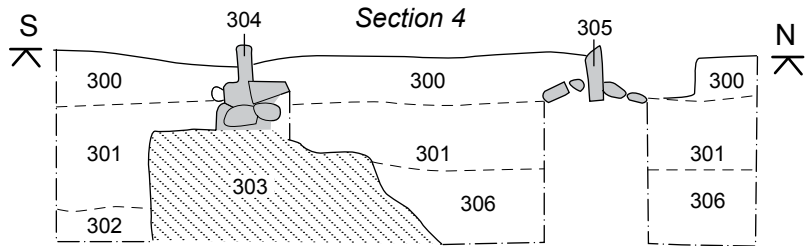
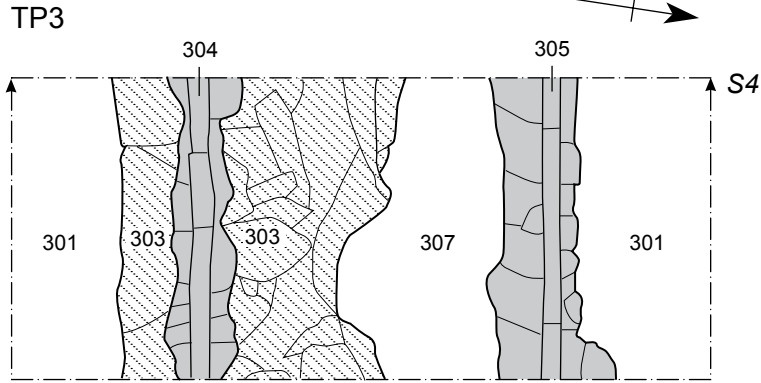
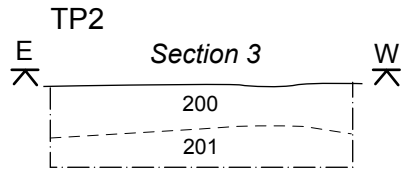


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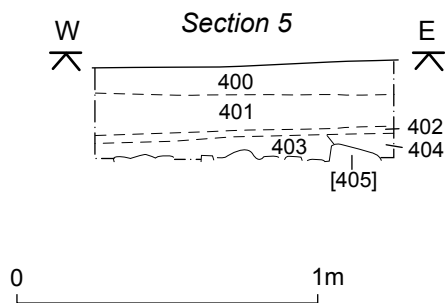
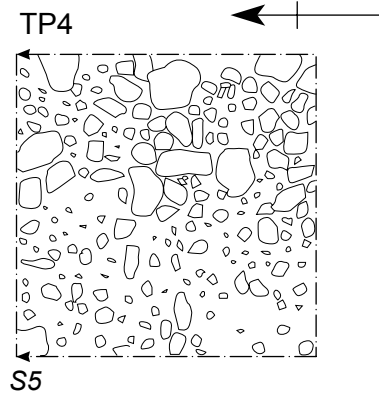
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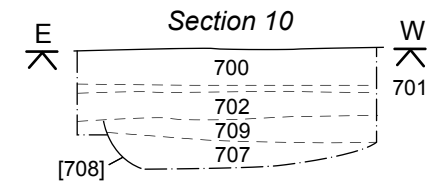
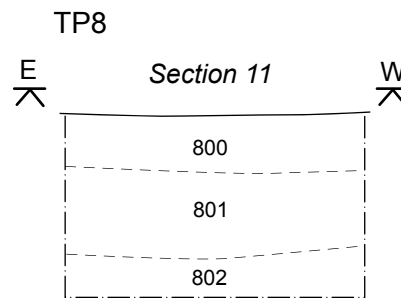
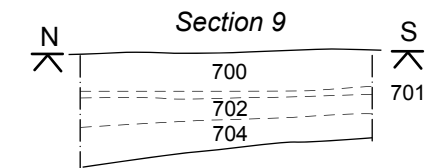
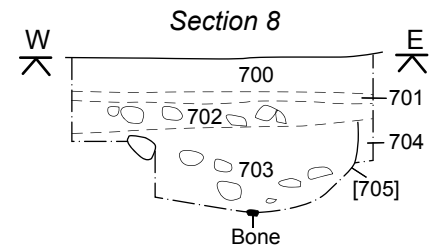
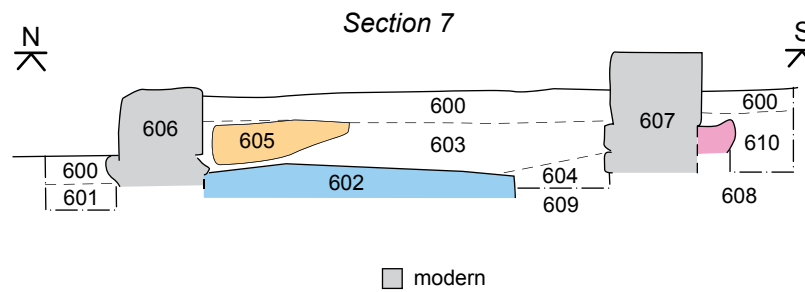
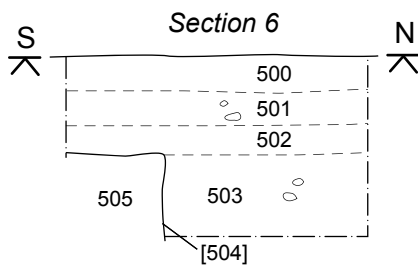
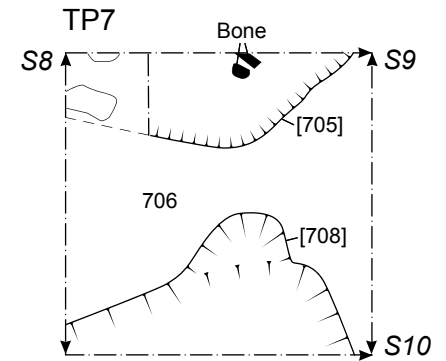
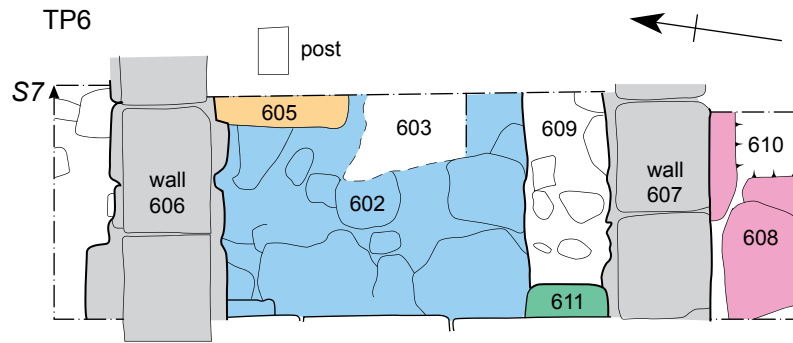
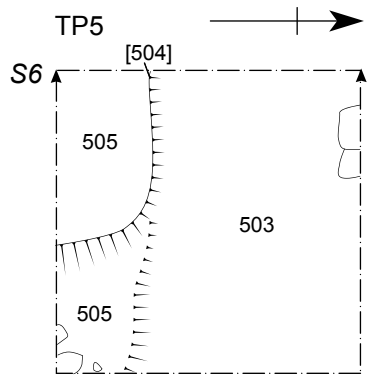
Figure 2: Trench and test pit locations





■ modern





0 1m



Trench 1: Looking southwest



Trench 1: Looking southwest



Test Pit 2: Looking south



Test Pit 3: Looking east



Test Pit 4: Looking west



Test Pit 5: Looking West



Test Pit 6: Looking northeast



Test Pit 7: Looking north



Test Pit 8: Looking west