



55-56 Church Street,
Tamworth

**ARCHAEOLOGICAL
WATCHING BRIEF**

PN 14-20

Project No. 14-20

[10/2014]

55-56 Church Street

Tamworth

ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF

By

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for

The Historic Environment Consultancy

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55-56 Church Street, Tamworth

Archaeological Watching Brief, [10/2014]

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55-56 Church Street, Tamworth

Archaeological Watching Brief, [10/2014]

SUMMARY

The Centre of Archaeology was commissioned in 10/2014 by The Historic Environment Consultancy, acting on behalf of Smith Brothers (Tamworth) Developers Ltd, to undertake an archaeological watching brief in respect of a proposed building extension and short sewer run at 55-56 Church Street, Tamworth. The investigations revealed the remnants of demolished 20th century outhouses alongside a number of features, including two possible rubbish pits in the south-western corner of the site dating to the 19th century and a modern drainage gully running from the south-west to north of the site. No Saxon or medieval finds were recovered from the site and there is no evidence that this site was occupied during aforementioned periods, although previous development and historical groundworks on this site may have removed any archaeological features and deposits dating to these earlier periods. Upon consideration of the stratigraphic record and the artefact assemblage recovered from the site, no further work is warranted on the site.

55-56 Church Street, Tamworth

Archaeological Watching Brief, 10/2014

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1.1. The Centre of Archaeology based at Staffordshire University was commissioned by The Historic Environment Conon behalf of Smith Brothers (Tamworth) Developers Ltd, to undertake an archaeological watching during the residential and retail development at 55-56 Church Street, Tamworth (hereinafter referred to as the site, Planning Application Number 0025/2014).
- 1.1.2. This report outlines the results of the watching brief carried out on 22nd October 2014, and has been prepared in accordance with a Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) (The Historic Environment Consultancy 2014) 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) (Appendix I). The project conformed to the Institute for Archaeologists Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Watching Briefs (IFA 1994, revised 2008)

2. LOCATION AND GEOLOGY

- 2.1.1. The site is located to the south of 55-56 Church Street, Tamworth, Staffordshire, and is centred on NGR SK 207 040 (Figure 1).
- 2.1.2. The underlying geology consists of Gravel overlying Mercian Mudstone.
- 2.1.3. The present character of the site is on urban land. To the north of the site lies a shop, access roads are located to the east and west of the site, and to the south of the site lies a small car park.

3. AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

- 3.1.1. The principal aim of the watching brief was to record any archaeological features, structures, deposits, or horizons exposed during intrusive groundworks across the site.
- 3.1.2. More specific aims were to:
 - Monitor all ground works (Figures 2 and 3). The work consists of demolishing an L shaped extension 3m x 11.5m and 3.6m x 2.2m and the construction of a new extension 12m x 6.3m.
 - Determine if any archaeological remains exist on the development area.
 - Excavate and record any archaeological remains that are present.

4. ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

- 4.1.1. The land is located within the centre of the Saxon town of Tamworth. Thus, there is potential for Saxon, medieval and post-medieval archaeological deposits to be present. The extent to which the ground has been disturbed already is unknown s it is also unknown if archaeological remains survive.

- 4.1.2. The Saxon burh (centred on SK 207 041) was constructed on the site of the earlier Saxon palace and enclosure. The 10th century burh was enclosed by town defences, which consisted of a ditch with timber palisade (HER record 01153). Archaeological excavations have sporadically taken place at this site from the late 1960s through to 2008. The only significant find recovered during archaeological excavations was a possible Roman coin (HER record 01153).
- 4.1.3. The site is situated 100m to the south-west of St. Editha's Church (SK 20784 04090). The present Church was constructed in 1080 and is one of the largest churches in the West Midlands. Further building work took place in the 13th century. During this period the old font, crypt and the north aisle of the nave were constructed (Visit Tamworth n.d.). The 'Great Fire of Tamworth' in 1345 consumed a number of the Norman arches in the chancel area. Restoration and further building work was carried out into the 15th century.
- 4.1.4. The site is situated 161m to the north-east of Tamworth Castle (SK 20613 03913). Tamworth Castle was constructed in the late 11th century and took the form of a motte and bailey castle. The structure was rebuilt in the 12th century and in the 12th-13th century, the north wing was constructed (English Heritage, 2014). Further renovation and construction continued up until the 19th century. Archaeological watching briefs and excavations have sporadically taken place at this site from 1977-2009 (Pastscape n.d.).

5. METHODOLOGY

- 5.1.1. Groundworks comprised the excavation of foundation trenches with a mini-digger fitted with a toothless bucket. This was monitored by a suitably qualified archaeologist and complemented with the salvage recording of any archaeological deposits and features revealed during works.
- 5.1.2. All stratigraphic sequences were recorded, even where no archaeology was present. Sections were drawn of all cut features and significant vertical stratigraphy at a scale of 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 digital photography.
- 5.1.3. Buried soils and sediment sequences were inspected and recorded on site. Examination of soil sediments conformed to guidelines set out in *Geoarchaeology: using earth sciences to understand the archaeological record* (English Heritage 2007).
- 5.1.4. Recovered finds were cleaned, marked and remedial conservation work undertaken as necessary. Treatment of all finds conformed to guidance contained within the Centre of Archaeology Fieldwork Manual (2013) and *First Aid for Finds* (Watkinson and Neal 1998).
- 5.1.5. 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 Potteries Art Gallery and Museum subject to permission from the landowner.

6. RESULTS

- 6.1.1. The natural deposit **1004** was identified across the site and comprised of mid yellowish-orange sand with 30% sandstone inclusions.
- 6.1.2. Pit feature **1005** was identified in the south-western corner of the site (in the same location as the first piling point) cutting through natural **1004** (Figure 3). Owing to the position of the feature and the limited extent of excavation, the shape and type of feature could not fully be established. The sides of the pit were vertical. The total length of the feature measured 3.00m and at least 1.00m wide with a depth of 1.27m (Figure 4). The feature contained only one fill (1006) which comprised of a very dark blackish-brown silty loam with infrequent (10%) very small (<2mm) stone inclusions. An animal bone (mandible with two teeth) was recovered close to the base of the pit. The date of **1005** and **1006** is unknown due to a lack of dating evidence. The function of pit feature **1005** is unknown but may have served as a rubbish pit based on the animal mandible recovered from **1006**.
- 6.1.3. A north-south aligned linear scoop **1007** was identified immediately to the north of the southern section of the site (Figure 3) cutting through natural **1004**. The scoop was U-shaped in profile with shallow sides. The length of this feature measured at least 1.44m with a width of 0.25m (although the feature continued outside of the excavated area). Deposit **1009** filled **1007** and was composed of very dark blackish-brown silty loam with infrequent (10%) very small (<2mm) stone inclusions. Deposit **1009** is similar in consistency, colour and composition to fill **1006** of pit **1005**. Animal bone was found towards the middle and bottom of this feature as well as a number of pottery sherds dating to the 19th century.
- 6.1.4. Feature **1008** was identified as a curvilinear drainage gully. This feature possessed steep sides and a U-shaped profile. A modern drain was identified in the south-west section of the feature. Gully **1008** was aligned south-west to north and ended at the building to the north of the site. This feature measured 4.77m in length, a maximum width of 0.80m and a minimum width of 0.49m and 0.29m in depth. **1008** cuts **1004** and was filled with **1003**.
- 6.1.5. A modern deposit (**1003**) of mixed dark reddish-brown redeposited natural with patches of clay and light orangey-red stone crush was identified at variable depths across the site. The maximum depth of this layer was recorded at 0.48m in the western section of the site. Building debris was found throughout this deposit which consisted of brick and tile fragments. A west-east aligned modern drain was recorded in the western section of **1003** and lay immediately above **1004**. Deposit **1003** sealed fills **1006** and **1009** of features **1005** and **1007**. This layer is modern in date.
- 6.1.6. In turn, **1003** was sealed by either **1002**, a modern layer of light grey concrete containing abundant medium-sized (>25mm) grey stone inclusions or **1001**, a dark orangey-brown sand deposit that was immediately below the surface concrete and tarmac across the site. **1001** comprised of abundant (>80%) building debris, including bricks, drain fragments and tiles. These layers are modern in date.

7. FINDS

- 7.1.1. Animal bone. A total of nine animal bone fragments were recovered during the watching brief. A fragmented sheep mandible and several other long bone fragments were recovered from fill **1006** of pit **1005**. The bones were in a good state of preservation with no identifiable butchery marks.

- 7.1.2. Metallurgy. One fragment of unidentifiable iron working slag was recovered from fill **1009** of feature **1007**.
- 7.1.3. Pottery and tile. A total of ten pottery sherds and larger fragments were recovered from fill **1009** of feature **1007**. These include fragment of Midlands Purple and Yellow Ware and fragments of ceramic drains. One patterned chinaware fragment was also identified. All of the pottery suggests a date of deposition in the 19th century. Two large tile fragments, one stone (slate) and one red ceramic, were also recovered from **1009**.

8. CONCLUSIONS

- 8.1.1. The investigations permitted preservation by record of all surviving archaeological remains that were disturbed by the proposed development. In addition to the remnants of demolished 20th century outhouses, the recorded features comprise of two probable 19th century rubbish pits, **1005** and **1007** and a modern drainage gully **1008**. No residual Saxon or medieval finds were recovered from the site. However, it is possible that previous construction and demolition of standing structures on the site could have destroyed any remains of earlier periods.
- 8.1.2. It is considered that the aims and objectives of the excavation have been achieved and that the results are representative of the nature of the archaeology across the development area.
- 8.1.3. No further work is warranted on the stratigraphic record or the artefact assemblage recovered from the site.

9. ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The project was commissioned by The Historic Environment Consultancy, on behalf of Smith Brothers (Tamworth) Developers Ltd. Thanks are due to The Historic Environment Consultancy for their co-operation and assistance throughout the project. Thanks are also due to the groundworks team of M and M Construction Ltd who assisted the on-site project archaeologist. Thanks also go to Debbie Taylor, who monitored the project on behalf of Staffordshire County Council. The assessment was undertaken by Kirsty Squires. Kirsty Squires produced the written report which was illustrated by Kevin Colls and edited by Kevin Colls who also managed the project for the Centre of Archaeology.

10. REFERENCES

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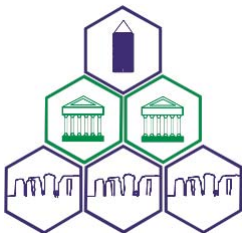
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Appendix 1 - Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI)



The Historic Environment Consultancy

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Tel: 01491 875584 Fax 01491 875239

Email drpeter@historicenvironment.co.uk

www.historicenvironment.co.uk

Written Scheme of Investigation Archaeological Watching Brief 55-56 Church St Tamworth Document Reference Number

1. Summary

Scheduled Start	Late November and will last 1-2 days
Archaeological Contractor	Centre of Archaeology Staffordshire University
Location	55-56 Church St Tamworth B79 7DF
Grid Reference	SK 207 040
Development	Proposed alterations and extensions to form 4 no. apartment dwellings to upper floors, extended ground floor retail area to form goods in area and shopfront alterations.
Planning Status	Post Permission
Planning Ref Number	0025/2014
Local Authority	Tamworth Borough Council
Planning Condition	Prior to the commencement of the development hereby permitted, a written scheme of archaeological investigation ('the scheme') shall be submitted for the written approval of the Local Planning Authority. The scheme shall provide details of the programme of archaeological works to be carried out within the site, including post-excavation reporting and appropriate publication. The scheme shall thereafter be implemented in full in accordance with approved plans. Reason: In order to ensure any potential archaeological interest in the vicinity of the site is protected and/or recorded in accordance with Paragraphs 126-128.
Brief For Archaeological Work	No brief has been issued.

Archaeological Interest	<p>The land is located within the centre of the Saxon Town of Tamworth. There is thus the potential for Saxon, Medieval or Post Medieval archaeological deposits to be present.</p> <p>The extent to which the ground has been disturbed already is unknown so it is also unknown if archaeological remains survive.</p>
The nature of a watching brief	<p>It is noted that a watching brief is used when:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The extent of ground disturbance is small eg small drainage trenches 2. 3. There is no alternative for practical reasons <p>In all cases the scope of work is restricted to what is safe and practical to do.</p>

Historic Environment Consultancy 38 Elvendon Rd Goring on Thames Oxon RG8 0DU, T01491 875584:drpeterwardle@yahoo.co.uk
www.historicenvironment.co.uk

Scope of Work	<p>Monitoring of all ground works.</p> <p>The work consists of demolishing an L shaped extension 3x11.5m+3.6 x 2.2m and the construction of a new extension 12x6.3m. This will be constructed using strip foundations.</p> <p>A short sewer run will be inserted.</p>
Objectives	<p>The objectives of the work are as follows:</p> <p>To determine if any archaeological remains exist on the development area.</p> <p>To excavate and record any archaeological remains that are present.</p>

2. Background Information

Landowner	Smith Brothers (Tamworth) Developments Ltd
The Client	Smith Brothers (Tamworth) Developments Ltd
Archaeological Development Control	
Organisation	Staffordshire County Council
Officer	Debbie Taylor
Desk Based Assessment	None
DBA Document Ref No	None
DBA Date	
Land Use	The land is currently Shop.
Geology	The underlying geology is Gravel overlying Mercian Mudstone.
Height mAOD	68 mAOD
Health and Safety	None
Other Constraints	None

3. Methodology

Methodology	<p>The full extent of ground disturbance will be determined. An archaeologist will be present when ever the ground is being disturbed unless it can be determined that no archaeological remains will be exposed. This will be agreed with SCC Historic Environment Team</p>
Site Specific Recording	<p>All archaeological remains will be recorded using the archaeological contractor's recording methodology.</p> <p>Photographs should be taken of all sides of the excavations.</p> <p>All layers and features, including the depths, should be described. The descriptions will include details of dating evidence etc.</p> <p>Accurate positions of the area of excavation will be plotted.</p>

Artefacts: Site-specific collection strategies	<p>Artefacts that provide dating or land use evidence must be collected.</p> <p>All other pre 19 th century artefacts will be collected.</p> <p>All artefacts from excavated contexts will be retained, except those from features or deposits of obviously modern date. In such circumstances, sufficient artefacts will be retained in order to elucidate the date and / or function of the feature or deposit. Material of undoubtedly modern date observed on the spoil heap would not be noted or retained.</p>
Environmental Sampling	<p>Environmental sampling will not take place unless significant dated environmental deposits are revealed, or the Archaeological Development Control Archaeologist deems it is appropriate / necessary. Any processing will be carried out by an experienced and competent archaeological contractor.</p>
Reporting	<p>A report will be produced detailing the results of the work. The specification for this work is described below.</p>
Archiving	<p>The archive will be deposited with the relevant local authority museum service. A copy of the report will also be submitted to OASIS (Online AccesS to the Index of archaeological investigations).</p>
Personnel	<p>To be confirmed</p>
Project Manager	<p>Kevin Colls Centre of Archaeology Staffordshire University</p>
Personnel On site Manager	<p>Kirsty Squires</p>
Timescale Post- excavation	<p>The post-excavation timescale is relevant to the findings of the exercise. It will differ depending on any artefacts recovered and</p>

	archaeological features present.
Copyright	The copyright of all data relating to the evaluation will belong to the client once all invoices have been paid with The Historic Environment Consultancy being allowed unlimited licence.
Minor Variation	Minor variations may be implemented for practical on-site reasons.
Major Variation	A curatorial authority will be notified of any major variation.
Monitoring	The local authority archaeology service will be given notice of the start of work so that a monitoring visit can be arranged. Normally 10 days notice will be given and they will be kept informed of progress.

4. Standard Methodologies

Health and Safety	<p>All work will be carried out in accordance with the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974 and the Management of Health and Safety Regulations 1992, and all other relevant Health and Safety legislation, regulations and codes of practice in force at the time. Correct PPE should be used at all times.</p> <p>The absence of underground services should be ascertained before digging commences.</p> <p>The main contractor is responsible for health and safety on site. The instructions of the engineer should be followed.</p> <p>Safe working practices will supersede archaeological considerations at all times.</p> <p>A risk assessment will be carried out before work starts on site.</p>
Personnel	A project manager will be responsible for the supervision of the project and will make monitoring visits to the site.
Excavation: Mechanical	<p>An appropriate machine must be used, with an appropriate bucket, usually a wide toothless ditching blade. Choice should be influenced by prevailing site conditions, and the machine must be able to carry out a clean job. All machine work must be carried out under the direct supervision of an archaeologist.</p> <p>The groundworks contractor is responsible for locating buried/above ground services, and for any consequences resulting from their damage.</p>
Excavation: General	All excavation, both by machine and by hand, must be undertaken with a view to avoiding damage to any archaeological features or deposits which appear to be worthy of preservation in situ.
Human Remains	Any human remains which are encountered must initially be

	<p>left insitu. If removal is necessary this must comply with relevant regulations.</p> <p>Relevant authorities including the Police and Ministry of Justice must be informed. The Historic Environment Consultancy is to be informed immediately any such discovery occurs. The County Archaeologist will also be informed.</p>
Inclement Weather	<p>In the instance that the weather or effects thereof on the site shouldnot be conducive to good healthy and safe working practices, work will cease until conditions improve.</p>
Recording: Drawing	<p>A complete drawn record of excavated archaeological features and deposits will be compiled. This will include both plans and sections. Plans will be tied in to the Ordnance Survey National Grid. Where appropriate, the Ordnance Datum height of all principal features will be calculated, and plans / sections annotated therewith.</p> <p>Drawings will be made at appropriate scales (1:10, 1:20, 1:100, 1:500) using drafting film and hard (4H-6H) pencils.</p>
Recording: Photography	<p>The photographic record will consist of high resolution SLR digital (6+ megapixel), and monochrome film images, with negatives, of archival quality.</p> <p>The photographic record will illustrate both the detail and general context of the principal features, finds excavated and the site and environs as a whole.</p>
Reporting	<p>All plans must be at a recognised standard scale, have a scale bar and be geo-referenced.</p> <p>Copies of the report will be circulated to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Client • The Planning Archaeologist • The HER: both digital and hard copies of the report will be supplied. • The institution where the archive will be deposited • The National Monuments Record • Local Studies <p>Library as appropriate.</p> <p>Copies of all digital photographs and digitised drawings should be circulated via CD or DVD.</p>
Post-excavation	<p>Post-excavation work will include detailed analysis of biological samples, sedimentary samples or artefacts as is necessary and appropriate for an evaluation.</p> <p>All artefacts will, as a minimum, be washed, weighed, counted and identified. Any artefacts requiring conservation or specific storage conditions will be dealt with immediately in line with First Aid for Finds (Watkinson and Neal 1998).</p>

Contents of Report	<p>The report will contain:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A non-technical summary • An outline description of the aims of the evaluation and the methodology used in order to achieve these aims • A descriptive text concerning the results of the evaluation, including finds • Supporting figures at appropriate scales showing the location of all excavated areas and features / deposits • Summary tables showing soil descriptions and depths for all excavations, and for all artefacts recovered
Archiving	<p>Prior to the commencement of fieldwork, arrangements will be made with the appropriate museum for deposition of the archive and finds, subject to agreement with the landowner. A museum accession number will also be sought at this time.</p> <p>The archive will be prepared to the standards set out in Management of Archaeological Projects (English Heritage, 1991).</p> <p>It will be prepared for long-term storage in accordance with guidelines for the preparation of excavation archives for long term storage (Walker 1990) and Standards in the museum care of archaeological collections (Museums and Galleries Commission 1994).</p> <p>The archive should be retained pending further work but it should be deposited with the relevant authority if further work does not take place.</p> <p>Subject to the wishes of the landowner, the entire archive (including any finds) will be deposited with the local museum service.</p>

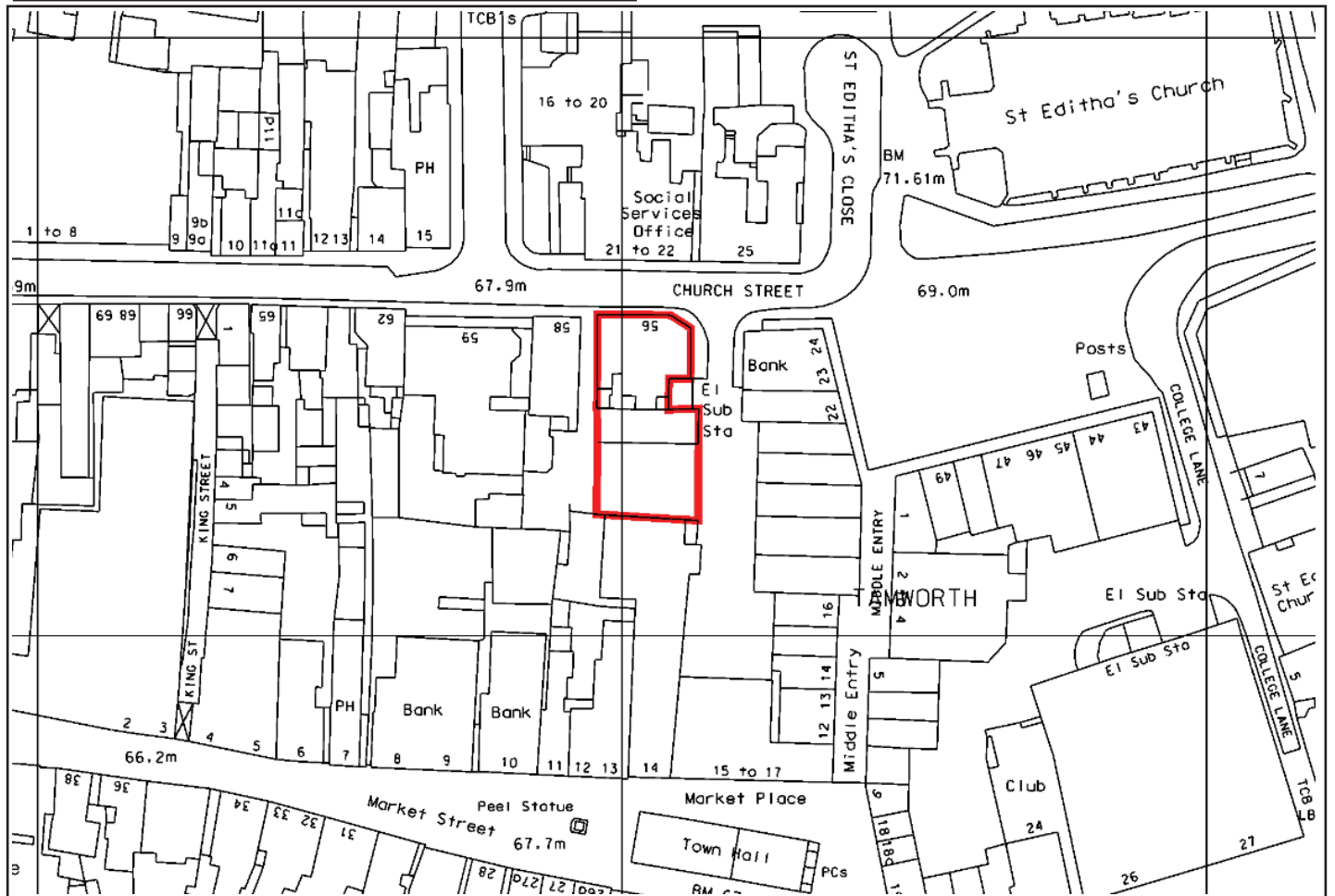


Figure 1 - Site location plan

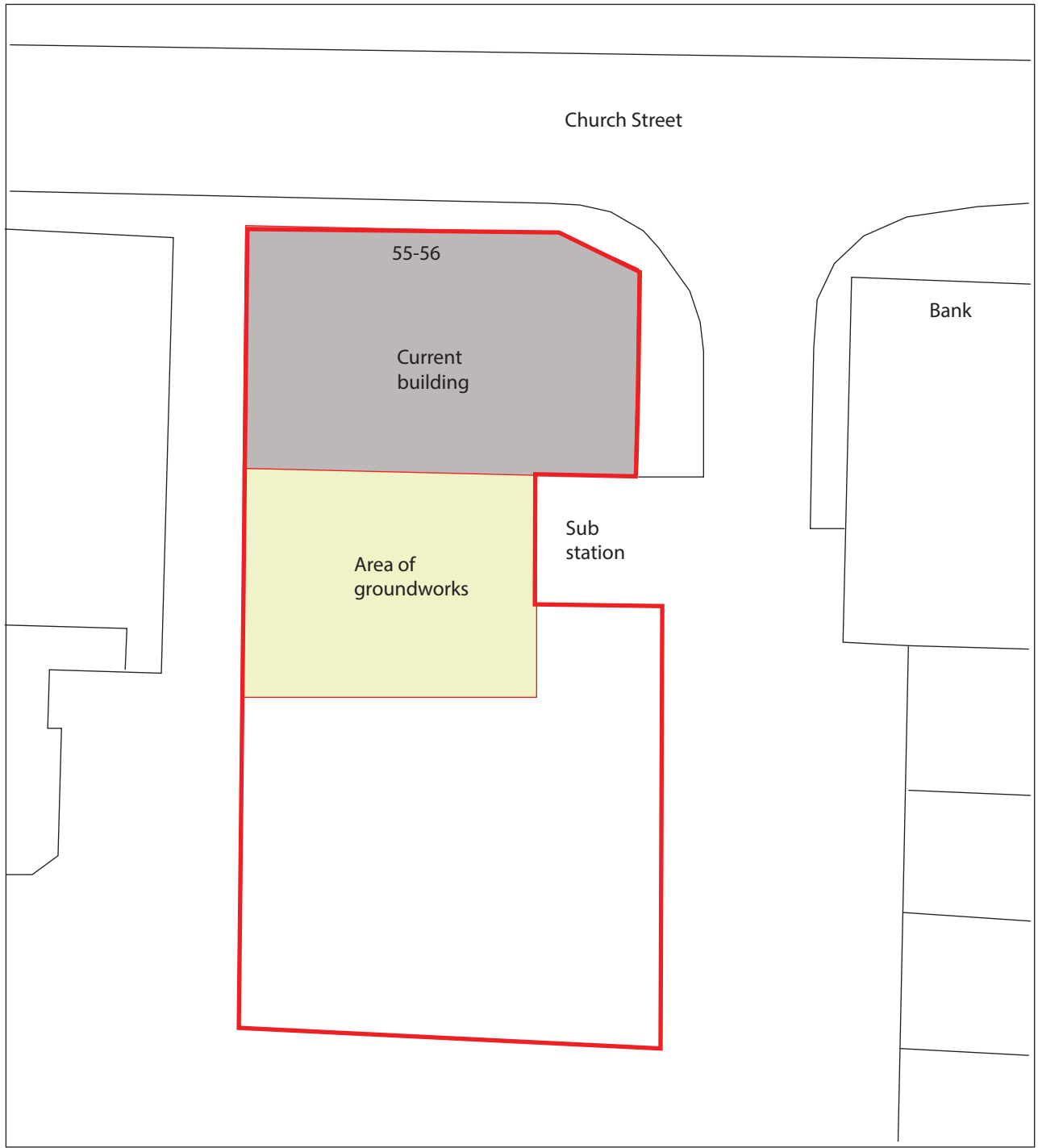


Figure 2 - Area of observed groundworks

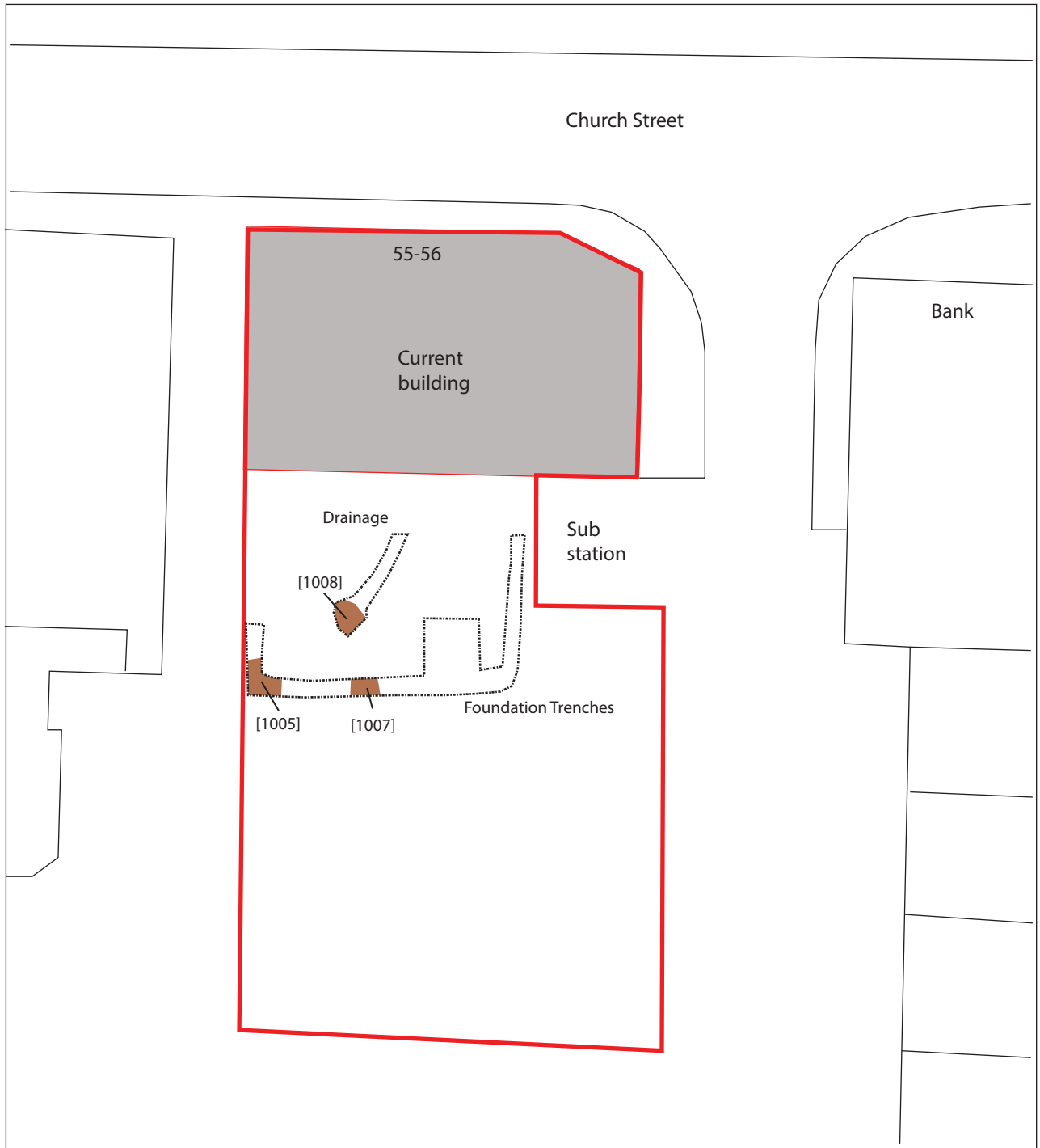
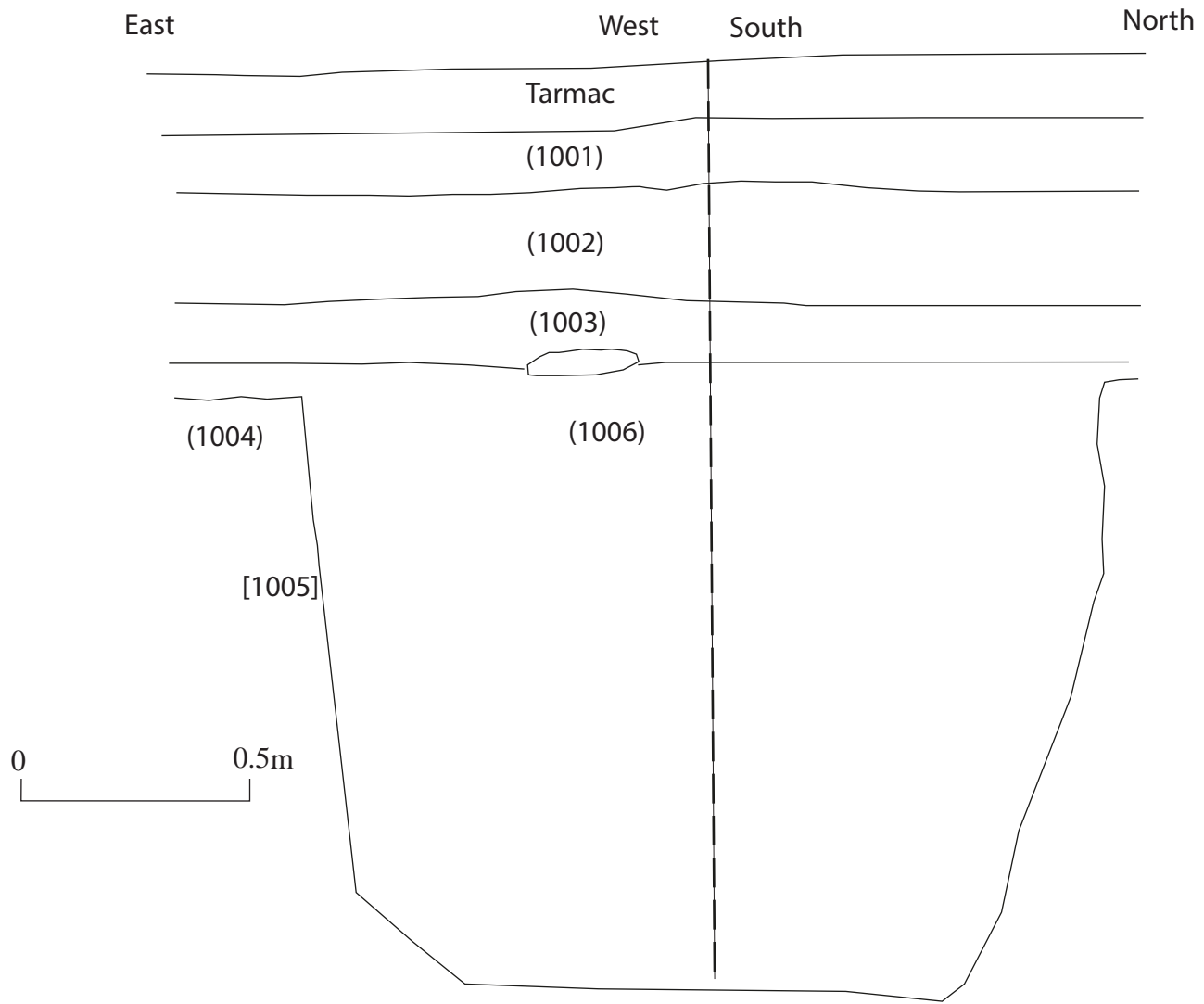


Figure 3 - Locations of foundation and drainage trenches including the archaeological features

Section of pit [1005]



Section of pit [1007]

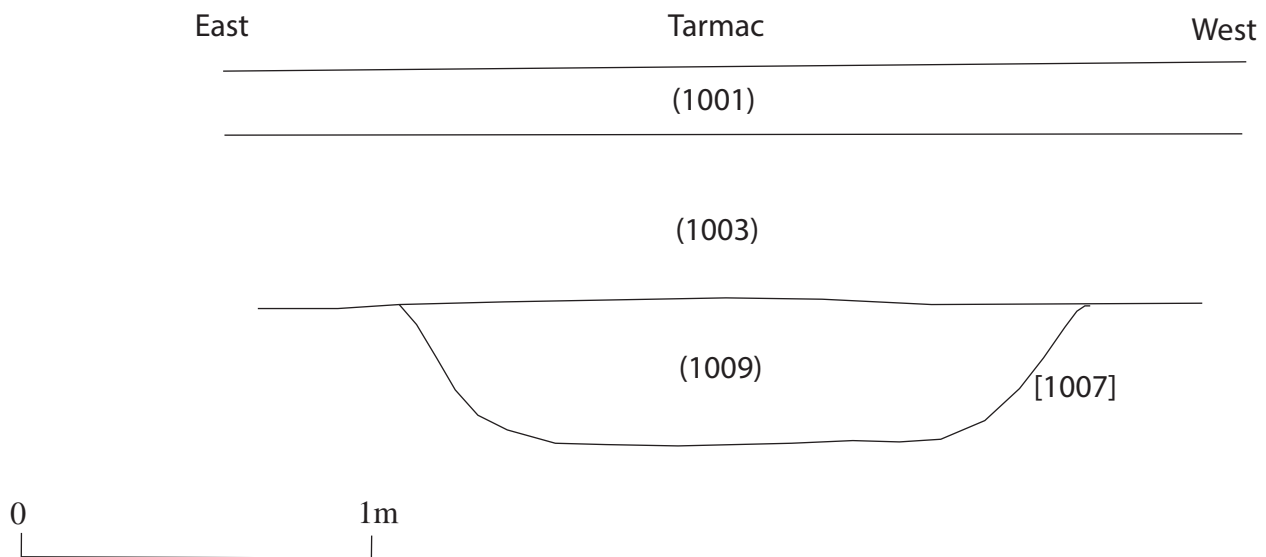




Plate 1 - General pre-excitation photo



Plate 2 - Excavation photo



Plate 3 - Photograph of pit [1005] looking north



Plate 4 - Photograph of pit [1007] looking south