

# NAU Archaeology

Report No. 1268

## **An Archaeological Evaluation and Watching Brief at Whitefriars Roundabout and Barrack Street, Norwich**

NHER 49952N

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BAU 1543

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Pockthorpe Gate by John Ninham, 1792

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Location: Whitefriars Roundabout and Barrack Street, Norwich  
District: Norwich  
Grid Ref: TG 2337 0938  
HER No.: 49952N  
Date of fieldwork: 20th to 23rd March 2007

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## **Summary**

*An archaeological watching brief was carried out on four small, narrow trenches excavated in the pavement on the north side of Barrack Street, Norwich. The primary reason for the excavation of the trenches was to locate services in advance of road widening and associated works. As anticipated all the trenches were heavily disturbed by modern services. In the two central trenches two flint, brick and mortar walls were recorded (one possible and one definite). These walls formed part of a post-medieval building demolished in the 1930s to make -way for the extant Bargate Court flats.*

*In addition a single evaluation trench measuring 2m by 8m was excavated on the traffic island of Whitefriars roundabout. Two flint and mortar and one brick wall were seen at the southern end of the trench, overlain by c.1.0m of make-up material deposited during the construction of the roundabout in the 1960s.*

## **1.0 Introduction**

The archaeological investigations described in this report were meshed in with site investigation works associated with the widening of Barrack Street and alterations to the Whitefriars roundabout (Fig. 1). A watching brief was carried out on four trenches excavated in the footway on the north side of Barrack Street and a single evaluation trench was dug on the island of the Whitefriars roundabout.

This project was commissioned by Richard Flowers of Norfolk County Council Planning and Transportation department.

The archaeological programme of works was undertaken to fulfil a planning condition implemented by Norwich City Council and in accordance with a Project Design and Method Statement prepared by NAU Archaeology (Ref: BAU 1543/AH) in response to a Brief issued by Norfolk Landscape Archaeology (NLA Ref: 5/3/2007/KH).

The work was designed to assist in defining the character and extent of any archaeological remains within the proposed redevelopment area, following the guidelines set out in *Planning and Policy Guidance 16 — Archaeology and Planning* (Department of the Environment 1990). The results will enable decisions to be made by the Local Planning Authority with regard to the treatment of any archaeological remains found.

The site archive is currently held by NAU Archaeology and on completion of the project will be deposited with Norfolk Museums and Archaeology Service, following the relevant policy on archiving standards.

## **2.0 Geology and Topography**

Barrack Street and Whitefriars roundabout are situated in a flat low lying area between 100m and 200m north of the River Wensum. The modern ground surface lie at approximately 2.7m OD at the junction of Barrack Street and Silver Road rising imperceptibly to c.3.0m OD adjacent to Whitefriars roundabout. North and west of the site ground levels rise sharply to c.40m OD in the environs of Mousehold Heath.

The geology of the Norwich area is characterised by glacial sands and gravels overlying Norwich Crag and Upper chalk. In the Whitefriars/Barrack Street area riverine gravel and alluvial deposits dating to the early Holocene predominate (BGS, 1975).

## **3.0 Archaeological and Historical Background**

The road now known as Whitefriars which connects the roundabout with Whitefriars Bridge was part of Cowgate prior to the 19th century (Sandred and Lindström 1989, 100). It has long been postulated that the historic Cowgate curving from Magdalen Street to Whitefriars Bridge via St. James's church (now the Puppet Theatre) mirrors the line of 10th century defences north of the River Wensum. Evidence gained during an archaeological watching brief in work in 1989 (Bown and Robinson 189) and excavations in 1992 (Emery and Ayers 1999) indicates that the Late Saxon defences most likely lie west of Whitefriars.

These investigations and others have indicated that although within the circuit of the early 14th-century walls it is likely that the Whitefriars/ Barrack Street area was not intensively occupied until the late medieval period. There may, however have been pockets of occupation adjacent to the two medieval churches which lay close to the roundabout. Both St. James's and St. Paul's churches possibility has their origin in the 12th century (Penn 2001, 11, Emery 2006, 6), though all of the extant fabric of the former is 14th century and later (Pevsner and Wilson 1997, 238–9). St Paul's Church lay west of the roundabout, on and to the north of the exit onto it from the St. Crispin's Road flyover. It had a round tower with origins at least as early as St. James's (Norfolk Historic Environment Record (NHER) 378). It was demolished in the 1960's. Despite the majority of the churchyard being north of the church, occupying the site of the present St. Paul's Square playground, 'major road works' in 1968–1969 disturbed a large number of burials. The human remains uncovered were removed by Norwich Castle Museum staff and reburied (NHER669).

The exception to the probable paucity of medieval occupation is the two major institutions located in the area south of the roundabout i.e. the Carmelite Friary and St Paul's Hospital.

East of Whitefriars lay the Carmelite friary founded in 1256 that gave it its name to the road (Penn 2001, 4). This monastic institution was little understood until excavations in 2002 revealed the site of the Cloister and Church (Shelley 2004). An undercroft associated with the friary lies c.100m south of the roundabout. It is likely that the Whitefriars complex extended no further north than the southern boundary of St. James churchyard (Penn 2001, 7). The Friary was built of marshy low lying ground that required considerable consolidation prior to its construction (Emery and Ayers 1999, Shelley 2004). Evidence of consolidation and ground-making dating to the 13th to 15th centuries has been found in excavations on the site of the former

Jarrold's print works loading bay (Emery and Ayers 1999) and at 71–75 Barrack Street (Hutcheson 2000).

West of Whitefriars, probably less than 100m southwest of the roundabout is the site of St. Paul's Hospital. The hospital was found in the early 12th century and was a monastic institution with connections to the Cathedral Priory. It grew into a large and prestigious establishment (Rawcliffe 1995) and was dissolved in the 1530s. The site later became a workhouse (NHER379) and the 1885 Ordnance Survey plan shows that much of the area was used as a school with some housing. Observations during the excavation of the foundations for the present Norwich Corrugated Board premises, southwest of Whitefriars roundabout in 1978 revealed remains of a flint-wall possibly associated with the hospital (NHER 387N). Although attempts have been made to reconstruct the plan of the hospital precinct (Campbell 1975) its precise extent and nature is unclear.

Less than 20m west of the mini-roundabout at the junction of Silver Road and Barrack Street was situated Pockthorpe Gate and modern Barrack Street follows approximately the line of the street that ran through the gate. The gate was recorded pictorially by John Ninham (*Frontispiece*) shortly before its demolition in 1792. Previous archaeological observations (NHER 819) indicate that on the south side of Barrack Street the city wall survives in places only c.0.05m below the modern surface.

The section of Barrack Street between the junction with Silver Road westwards to the roundabout was called Bargate Street in the mid 18th century and St. James Street by the late 19th century (Sandred and Lindström 1989, 86-87). Barrack Street itself is named after the Calvary Barracks, also known as Nelson Barracks which stood c.300m west of Pockthorpe gate from 1792 until the 1960s (Pevsner and Wilson 1997, 333). The barracks occupied land associated with Hasset's House, originally a monastic grange (farm) belonging to Norwich Cathedral Priory in the medieval period (Underdown, 2002). The area between Silver Road and the barracks was occupied from the 1820s until the mid 20th century by Steward and Patteson's brewery.

The area both east and west of the Gate was known as Pockthorpe. As mentioned above it is unlikely that Pockthorpe was intensively occupied prior to the late medieval period. Cartographic evidence (Frostick 2002, Penn 2001, Underdown 2002) indicate that by the mid 16th century both sides of modern Barrack Street (east and west of Pockthorpe gate) were occupied with buildings. Although remaining much the same in overall size (Ayers 2003, 147) the population of Pockthorpe expanded in the 17th and 18th centuries. By the early 18th century the area had become notorious for its poverty and poor housing (Goreham 1974). Dwellings were ranged around cramped yards with little light and poor sanitation and were often occupied by the very poor (Muthesius 1984). By the mid 19th century social reformers had turned their attentions to the district. Despite several investigations and reports containing lurid descriptions conditions had changed little by the end of the 19th century (Goreham 1974). In addition to the poor living conditions Pockthorpe was also known in the 19th century for "drunkenness....infidelity and vice" (Hale 1984, 170) with approximately one public house per 100 people in the parish of St. James. The citizens of Pockthorpe were also known for their disregard for authority. There were serious riots in the area in 1720 and in the 19th century Pockthorpe set up its own 'alternative' pageant guild complete with mayor and aldermen headquartered in the Cellar House public house. Events in mockery of the mayoral

procession organised by the guild of St. George took place and included a Pockthorpe 'alternative' snap dragon and presumably whifflers (Goreham 1974).

Although 'slum clearance' programmes began in Norwich in the late 1870s they did not begin to gain real impetus until after WWI (Muthesius 1984). All of the courts along Barrack Street were demolished in the 1930s and replaced with the flats present today and commercial buildings. Some of the demolished buildings were larger dwellings of at least 17th-century date (Plate 1) which had become subdivided and extended (Goreham 1974). Many of the courts and yards also contained 19th century 'back to back' type structures with three or four storeys (Muthesius 1984). The name Pockthorpe was so tainted that it was not resurrected until the late 1960s or early 1970s with the creation of Pockthorpe Gate, part of the low rise extension to the Heathgate Estate.

#### **4.0 Methodology**

The objective of the project was to determine as far as reasonably possible the presence or absence, location, nature, extent, date, quality, condition and significance of any surviving archaeological deposits within the development area.

The Brief required that an evaluation trench with an area of 16m<sup>2</sup> was to be excavated with the area of traffic island to be converted into carriage-way. In addition, four trenches through the paving on the north side of Barrack Street, dug to test the location of services, were monitored under Watching Brief conditions.

Machine excavation was carried out by operatives of Newells Civil Engineering Ltd using hydraulic 360° excavator of approximately 5 tonnes in weight. The mechanical excavator was fitted with toothless ditching bucket. All machine excavations were carried out to archaeological specifications and under constant archaeological supervision.

The evaluation trench was machine excavated under archaeological supervision for approximately two-thirds of its length to a depth of c.1.0m. The southern one-third was machine excavated to a depth of between 0.8 and 0.9m below the modern surface. The walls in the southern part of the trench (see below) were then exposed by hand excavation and the entire trench hand-cleaned

All archaeological features and deposits were recorded using NAU Archaeology *pro forma* sheets. Trench locations, plans and sections were recorded at appropriate scales and colour and monochrome photographs were taken of all relevant features and deposits.

Spoil, exposed surfaces and features were scanned with a metal detector. All metal-detected and hand-collected finds, other than those which were obviously modern, were retained for inspection.

All levels were taken in relation to a temporary benchmark located on a tree stump on the traffic island. The temporary benchmark was tied into control points with height value in metres above Ordnance Datum using pre-existing survey data. The Evaluation Trench and the Watching Brief trenches were located using the same survey data.

Due to the lack of suitable deposits, no environmental samples were taken.

Once safe methods of access and egress onto the roundabout island had been established no significant practical problems were encountered. Though cold, windy and overcast weather conditions were in general favourable.

## 5.0 Results

### 5.1 The Watching Brief

As mentioned above four slit trenches were excavated within the footway on the northern side of Barrack Street (Fig. 2). All the trenches measured c.0.3m wide, the length of the pavement (c.1.5m to 1.8m) and between 0.5m and 0.6m deep. They were hand excavated by operatives from Newells Civil Engineering Ltd. No finds were recovered from any of the trenches.

#### 5.1.1 Watching Brief Trench 1

This trench was aligned northeast-to-southwest and was c.0.55m deep. Nothing other than modern services and backfill associated with them was seen. Hard fired blue engineering brick pavements were seen towards the base of the trench. They had undoubtedly been part of an external surface of mid 20th century date but were not *in situ*.

#### 5.1.2 Watching Brief Trench 2

This Trench was aligned north-to-south and excavated to a depth of approximately 0.5m. A possible fragment of flint and mortar wall [05] was seen at the southern basal edge of this trench. It was impossible to tell if it was an *in situ* wall or merely a large lump of rubble within the more general overlying demolition deposit [04]. This material chiefly consisted of crushed mortar mixed with dark sandy loam and some brick and flint rubble. It was overlain by a dark grey sandy ash deposit [03], a make-up layer of some kind post-dating the 1930s slum clearance demolitions. This material was cut by modern services which took up the northern half of the trench.

#### 5.1.3 Watching Brief Trench 3

Trench 3 was also aligned north-to-south and was c.0.6m deep. In the centre of the trench a flint, brick and mortar wall [07] was seen (Plate 2). It was c.0.35m thick and bonded with hard coarse yellowish lime mortar. The top of wall [07] was directly below the underside of the asphalt, less than 0.1m below the modern surface. Its overall appearance was consistent with a later post-medieval date, although there was no conclusive evidence for this. Either side of the wall only modern service trenches and their associated fills were seen.

The position of wall [07] almost exactly corresponds with the that of the rear wall of a small domestic building shown fronting onto Barrack Street on the Ordnance Survey 1:500 plan of 1885 (Fig. 3). Wall [07] formed part of a building that was sandwiched between two unnamed yards west of Wrestler's Yard, regarded as one of the worst in Pockthorpe in the 19th century (Goreham 1974).

#### 5.1.3 Watching Brief Trench 4

The westernmost slit trench was also aligned north-to-south and excavated to a depth of c.0.6m. At least three separate service runs consisting of five pipes or cables ran through this trench. No archaeological features or deposit were observed.

## 5.2 The Evaluation Trench

(Figs. 4 and 5)

The Evaluation trench was located on the island of Whitefriars roundabout and was aligned north-northeast-to-south-southwest (Fig. 2, Plate 3). It was 2.0m wide and 8.0m long. As mentioned above it was mechanically excavated under archaeological supervision to a depth of c.1.0m for most of its length. The material removed consisted of three elements, all make-up deposits for the island, dating from the 1960s or later (Fig. 4). The uppermost layer of topsoil and turf [10] was surprisingly thin. Below this was a layer of almost pure highly compacted orange-brown sand and gravel hoggin [11]. This overlay a more mixed layer [12] comprised of hoggin mixed with sandy loam topsoil-like material, brick and flint rubble, crushed mortar demolition material and dark silty material of probable riverine origin which contained occasional fragments of preserved twigs. This layer was clearly derived from a number of sources, probably from relatively close by. It contained finds dated to the 17th and 18th centuries (recorded as context [08]). The trench was not excavated to depth of 1.2m partly due to the presence of live telecommunications cables and due to the fact that removing a further 0.2m of 1960s roundabout make-up material would not have led to the gathering of any meaningful archaeological data.

Below these deposits towards the southern end of the trench three walls were seen (Fig. 5, Plate 4). Possibly the earliest of these was wall [16], constructed of a flint and fine creamy white lime mortar with occasional brick fragments. It was aligned northeast to south-west. A sample was taken of these brick fragments and they have been dated to the medieval period (Ceramic Building Material, below). Given their fragmentary nature it is highly likely the brick fragments have been reused from an earlier structure, perhaps the Carmelite Friary or St. Paul's Hospital. A 17th or 18th century date for the construction of wall [16] seems most likely. Either contemporary or slightly later in date than wall [16] was wall [17]. It was parallel to and similar in many ways to wall [17]. However it had no visible brick content, a distinct curvilinear shape and was rendered on its northernmost face. Walls [16] and [17] undoubtedly formed part of the same structure, probably a domestic building dating to the post-medieval period. Anthony Hochsetter's Norwich map of 1789 shows the area of the roundabout occupied by buildings.

The latest of the walls [21] was a single skin brick structure of soft 'Norfolk Red' type bricks. It was aligned east-to-west, and was at right-angles to the end gable of the terraced houses shown on the 1885 Ordnance Survey 1:500 plan of 1885. These houses formed the southern side of Willis Street which was present prior to the construction of the roundabout in the 1960s. Wall [21] is probably the remains of a below ground drainage feature or similar.

## 6.0 The Finds

### Introduction

The finds from the site are presented in tabular form with basic quantitative information in Appendix 2a Finds by Context.

In addition to this summary, more detailed information on specific finds and environmental categories is included in separate reports below. Supporting tables for these contributions are included in the Appendices.

Particular objects or small finds listed in Appendix 2a Finds by Context are catalogued in more detail in Appendix 5 Small Finds.

## 6.1 Pottery

By Sue Anderson

A total of 3 sherds of pottery weighing 134g was collected. Table 1 shows the quantification by context.

These unabraded sherds were found redeposited in layers within the 1960s roundabout make-up layer. They consisted of a body sherd of Late medieval and Transitional ware (LMT), a rim fragment from a Glazed Red Earthenware (GRE) jar and a body fragment from a Nottingham-type stoneware vessel (ESWN). All three are from different periods of Norwich's past, and all are typical of the pottery from the city. The group is too small for further interpretation

Context	Fabric	No.	Weight kg	Description	Spotdate
8	LMT	1	0.068	large body sherd, green-glazed interior & exterior	15th-16th C.
8	GRE	1	0.052	rim of jar (Jennings 1981, fig 72), partial orange-green glaze interior	16th-18th C.
8	ESWN	1	0.014	body sherd, deep brown metallic wash externally, clear glaze internally.	19th C.

Table 1. Pottery catalogue

## 6.2 Ceramic Building Material

By Lucy Talbot

The site produced two examples of medieval ceramic building material weighing 0.717kg. The assemblage was quantified (counted and weighed) by form and fabric (see Appendix 4). The fabrics were identified by eye and the main inclusions noted. Fabric descriptions and dates are based on the provisional type series established by Sue Anderson.

The assemblage consists of two fragments of reused early brick dating from the thirteenth to fifteenth century (0.717kg). Both examples are heavily encrusted with lime mortar and were made using fine estuarine clays with coarse inclusions of grog, ferrous pellets and vegetable matter.

## 6.3 Clay Tobacco Pipes

By John Ames

The clay tobacco pipe assemblage from the Whitefriars roundabout, Norwich (NHER 49952N) consisted of two bowls/stems recovered redeposited in a single modern context. The dating of the assemblage has been principally based on the London-type series of bowl forms (Oswald 1975) and the previously published and analysed material from Norwich (Atkin 1985). No attempt was made to employ stem bore dating techniques. The pieces are described below (Table 2).

Context	Description	No	Spot Date	Discussion
8	Bowl and stem fragment	2	Early to mid 17th century	One bowl is small with a bulbous waist and slightly crude in manufacture with the heel almost merging into the stem.  One bowl is more upright but still shows signs of a distinctive middle bulge.

Table 2. Clay tobacco pipe assemblage

The bowls are probably contemporary with each other and date to the early-to-mid 17th century.

## 6.4 The Metalwork

By Julia Huddle

Only two items were recovered on site consisting of a piece of undiagnostic lead and a badly corroded copper alloy fitting dated to the post-medieval period, both from context [09] (Table 3).

Context	Material	Object name	Description	Object date
09	Lead	Scrap		Undiagnostic
09	Copper alloy	Fitting	Square frame with rectangular opening	Late post-medieval

Table 3. The Metalwork

## 7.0 Conclusions

All of the building remains seen belonged to post-medieval structures mapped either in 1789 or in detail by the Ordnance Survey in 1885. The fact that no remains of the gable wall of the south-easternmost terraced house of Willis Street was seen in the Evaluation Trench probably means that most of the foundations of the late Victorian terraced houses that were present prior to the construction of the roundabout have already been removed. Proposed alterations to the roundabout could however reveal further traces of buildings dating to the post-medieval period.

Similarly the remains of buildings dating to the post-medieval period demolished during the 'slum clearances' of the 1930s will probably be uncovered during works associated with the widening of the northern side of Barrack Street. It is possible that works associated with the creation of the new island in the middle of Barrack Street opposite the Silver Road junction may uncover remains of the city wall.

### ***Acknowledgements***

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### **Appendix 1a: Context Summary**

<b>Context</b>	<b>Category</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Period</b>
01	Deposit	Backfill of modern service trench [02] Watching Brief Hole 2	Modern
02	Cut	Modern service trench Watching Brief Hole 2	Modern
03	Deposit	Thin layer of black ash and sand Watching Brief Hole 2	Modern
04	Deposit	Demolition deposit Watching Brief Hole 2	Modern
05	Masonry	Remains of possible disturbed flint wall Watching Brief Hole 2	Modern
06	Deposit	Modern services Watching Brief Hole 3	Modern
07	Masonry	East-to-west aligned flint and brick wall Watching Brief Hole 3	Post-medieval
08	Finds	Finds recovered during machining/cleaning Evaluation trench	-
09	Finds	Metal detected finds recovered from Evaluation Trench	-
10	Deposit	Topsoil in the Evaluation Trench	Modern
11	Deposit	Hoggin-based 1960s roundabout make-up	Modern
12	Deposit	Mixed 1960s roundabout make-up	Modern
13	Masonry	Post-1960's concrete and brick service related structure	Modern
14	Deposit	Fill of BT service trench	Modern
15	Cut	BT service trench	Modern
16	Masonry	Flint, brick and mortar wall	Post-medieval
17	Masonry	Curing flint and brick wall	Post-medieval
18	Deposit	Fill of construction cut [18] for wall [17]	Post-medieval
19	Cut	Construction cut for wall [17]	Post-medieval
20	Deposit	Soil/occupation deposit	Post-medieval
21	Masonry	Single skin brick wall of soft 'Norfolk Red' type bricks	Post-medieval
22	Deposit	Mixed ?demolition material	Modern

### **Appendix 1b: OASIS feature summary table**

<b>Period</b>	<b>Feature type</b>	<b>Quantity</b>
Post-medieval (1540 to 1900AD)	Walls	3

### **Appendix 2a: Finds by Context**

<b>Context</b>	<b>Material</b>	<b>Quantity</b>	<b>Weight (kg)</b>	<b>Period</b>
08	Pottery	3	0.141	Post Medieval
08	Clay Pipe	2	0.033	Post Medieval
16	Ceramic Building Material	2	0.717	Medieval

### **Appendix 2b: NHER finds summary table**

<b>Period</b>	<b>Material</b>	<b>Quantity</b>
Medieval (1066 to 1539AD)	Brick	2
Post-medieval (1540 to 1900AD)	Pottery	3
Post-medieval (1540 to 1900AD)	Buckle	1
Post-medieval (1540 to 1900AD)	Lead object	1

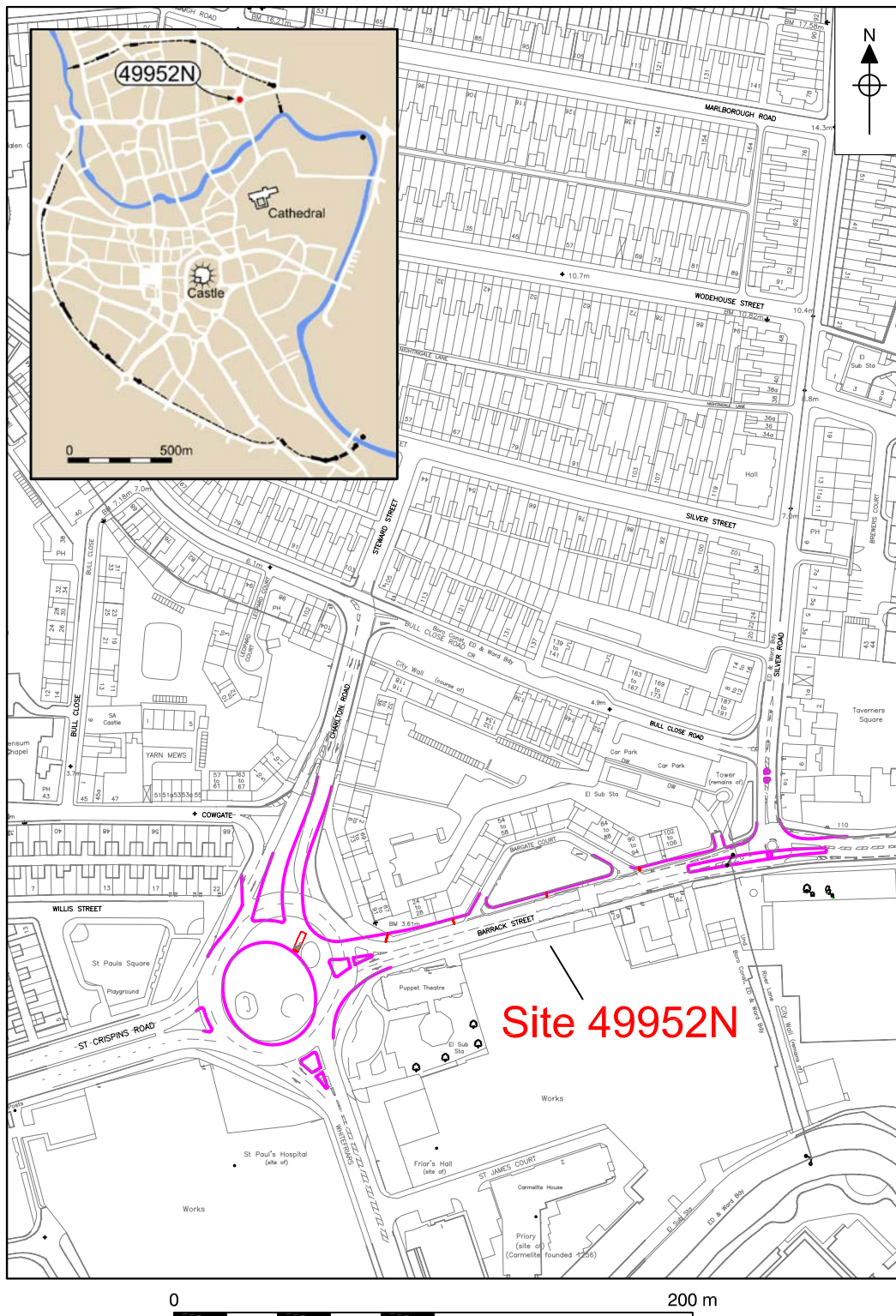
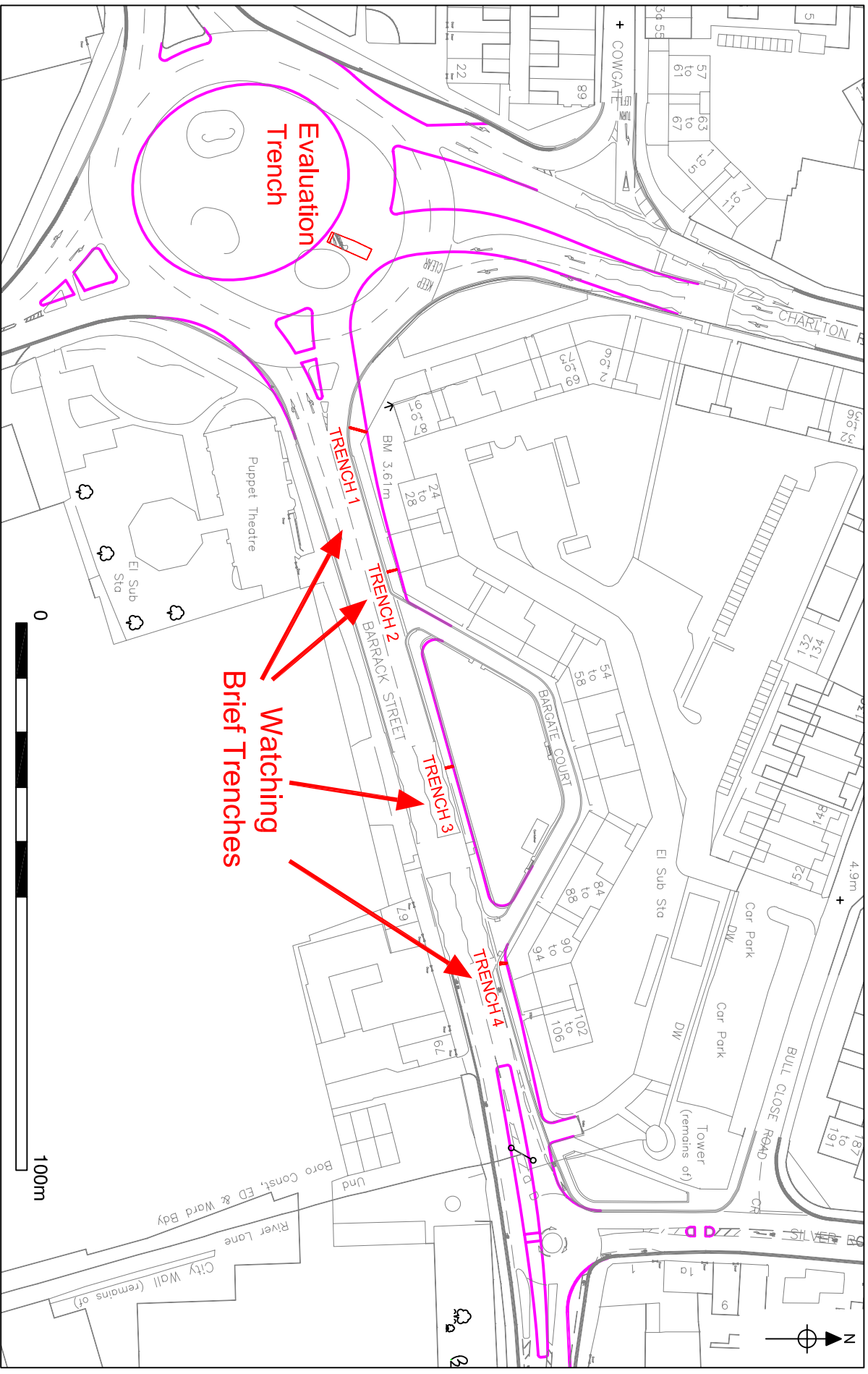


Figure 1. Site location; proposed new road layout in magenta. Scale 1:2500

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**Figure 2. Trench locations; proposed new road layout in magenta. Scale 1:1000**

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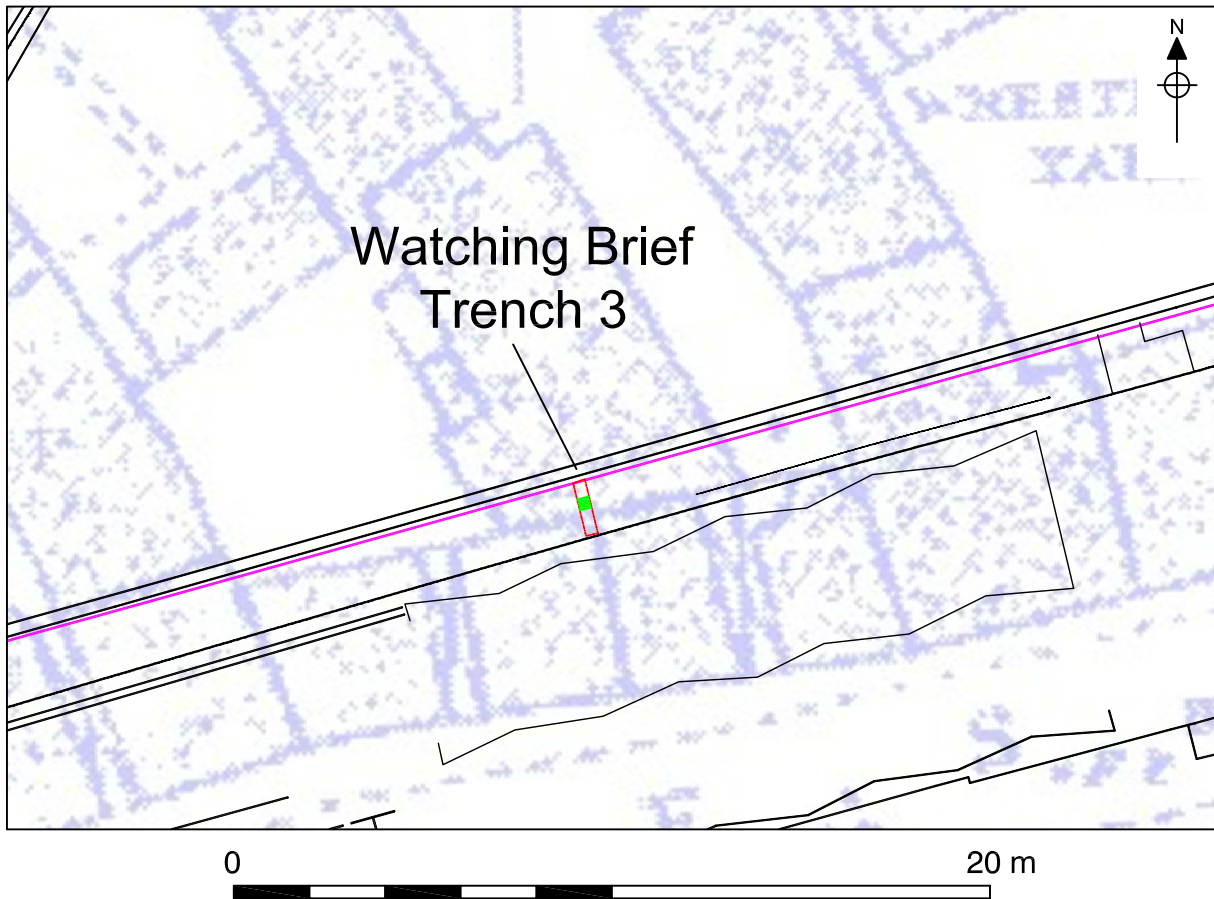


Figure 3. The Ordnance Survey 1885 plan overlaid with modern mapping also show the position of wall [07] (green) seen in Watching Brief Trench 3. Scale 1:200

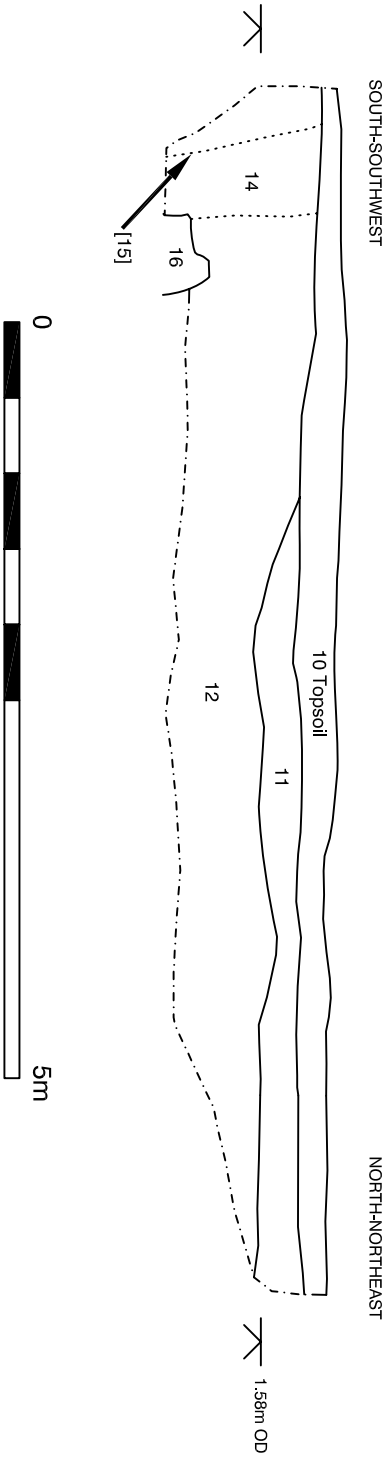


Figure 4. South-southwest facing section of evaluation trench. Scale 1:50

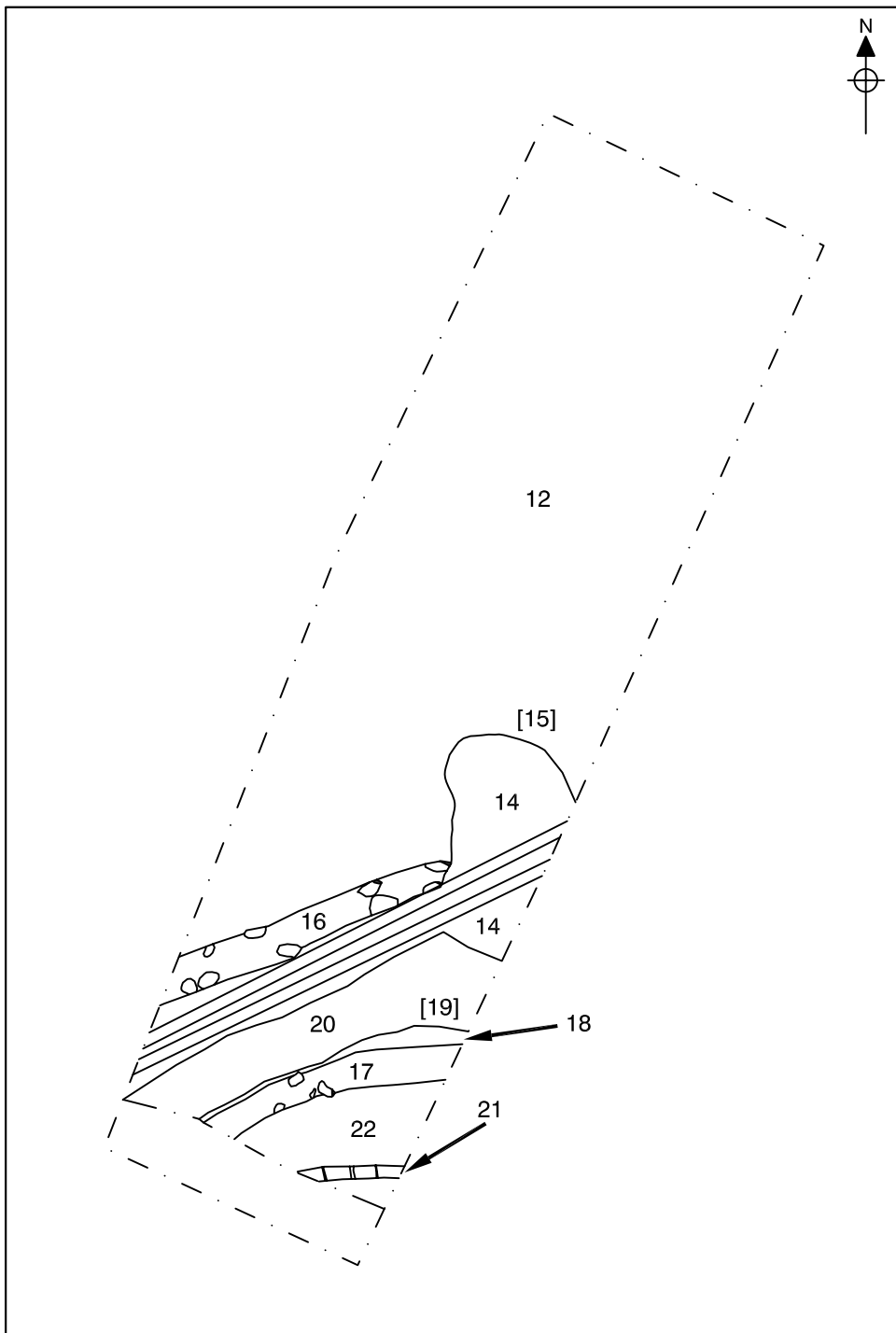


Figure 5. Plan of evaluation trench. Scale 1:50





Plate 1. 23-33 Barrack Street photographed in 1936 by the late George Plunkett. These buildings lay east of St James's Church on the south side of the street



Plate 3. Looking south-south-east down the Evaluation Trench with Whitefriars and the Cathedral spire in the background



Plate 2. Looking west at wall[07] in Watching Brief Trench 3 (scale 0.5m)



Plate 4. Looking south-south-east down the Evaluation Trench at walls [16], [17] and [21]