

NORFOLK ARCHAEOLOGICAL UNIT

Report No. 771

Report on an Archaeological Watching Brief at
Tesco Metro Supermarket, 5 Guildhall Hill, Norwich

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Local Authority No.076759

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Location: Tesco Metro Supermarket, 5 Guildhall Hill, Norwich
Grid Ref: TG 22927 08638
SMR No.: 37402N
Date of work: 30th September, 2nd and 3rd October, 10th October 2002

Summary

An archaeological watching brief was undertaken during provision of a loading ramp to the rear of Tesco Metro Supermarket at 5 Guildhall Hill, Norwich. Chalk natural was observed in the south-east of the site. A pit of apparent medieval or early post-medieval date cut this chalk natural. To the south west of the area the upstanding walls of a Second World War air raid shelter survived. Construction of this shelter appears to have truncated or removed any further archaeological deposits. The high level of chalk natural indicates that outside the area affected by the air raid shelter, a presumably earlier episode of truncation or landscaping had taken place.

1.0 Introduction

An archaeological watching brief was carried out to the rear of Tesco Metro Supermarket at 5 Guildhall Hill, Norwich (Fig. 1). It was undertaken in accordance with a Brief issued by Norfolk Landscape Archaeology (NLA Ref: 26/10/02/ARJH), supplemented by a Method Statement for watching briefs prepared by the Norfolk Archaeological Unit. The work was commissioned by Ratcliffe Groves Partnership Development Services.

The objective of this watching brief was to observe and record any archaeological deposits revealed by the construction of a loading ramp. The groundworks for this involved the removal of a depth of fill material, construction of concrete walls, the insertion of a sump and provision of a scissor hoist.

A series of four site visits were programmed into the groundwork schedule at times when exposed deposits could be observed and recorded. The groundworks were in progress by the time of the first visit, the 30th September. This prevented observation of the eastern section and base of the site, where concrete had already been poured.

The site sloped down from north-to-south, with an approximate height of 14.00m OD in the north. Site access was good, and the weather dry and bright for the duration of the visits.

The Brief required that appropriate records should be made. All archaeological features and deposits were recorded using the Norfolk Archaeological Unit's *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.

The Norfolk Museums and Archaeology Service, following the relevant policy on archiving standards, currently hold the site archive.

2.0 Archaeological and Historical Background

The site is located within the historic core of Norwich. Excavated evidence for Late Saxon and Norman pottery production comes from the nearby streets of Lobster Lane, Bedford Street and Pottergate. At least two pottery kilns are known to have

been present within 100m of the site (Carter *et al.* 1974, 66; Atkin and Sutermiester 1978, 20; Atkin *et al.* 1983). The present market place, to the south of the site, was a Norman establishment.

Historical records indicate that Dove House, immediately to the east of this development, was destroyed in the 16th century, and that it may have possessed a medieval cellar. Anthony Hochstetter's map of 1785 indicates the area of the site to be built up. Recent archaeological work has been undertaken approximately 100m to the north with an evaluation at 6-12 St Andrew's Street (Percival 2002). This indicated a high level for natural chalk bedrock, present at 0.40m to 0.70m below the modern surface. The conclusion was that significant terracing or landscaping had taken place.

3.0 Observations

In the south east of the site an off-white to pale yellow chalk ((06)) was present. This was interpreted as representing natural. This was overlain by 0.30m of modern concrete. This chalk was cut by a steep sided pit ([05]). Though partially removed by groundworks, the pit appeared to be circular in plan with an estimated minimum diameter of 1.30m. Its fill consisted of a dark grey brown soil ((04)) which contained a small quantity of chalk flecks and medium sized flints. Its location, obscured by shuttering, prevented closer observation. No finds were retrieved. The base of this feature, visible during groundworks, gave a measured depth of 1.60m.

The only other historical features of interest were the remains of a Second World War air raid shelter (Fig. 2). This was constructed from reinforced concrete walls ((02)) which measured 0.35m in width with up to 1.00m of upstanding height. It was apparent that construction of this shelter had truncated the height of natural chalk, most demonstrably in the south of the site. Elsewhere the sections indicated that modern makeup material ((01)) was present, either infilling the remains of the shelter or forming the fill of modern services trench aligned north-to-south along the western edge of site. This deposit contained modern brick fragments and fragments of cloth.

4.0 The Finds

No finds were retrieved.

5.0 Conclusions

A large area of this site, principally in the south-west, had been affected by the construction of an air raid shelter. This deep, effectively basement structure would have truncated or removed any surviving archaeological deposits or structures to a great depth. Where this shelter has not impinged, the survival of a single pit and the high level of natural chalk are significant. While this pit could not be dated by artefactual evidence, it can be tentatively dated as medieval or early post-medieval, based on its form and lack of modern inclusions. Though offering a limited potential for interpretation, similar large pits can be associated with activity to the rear of properties. In this case, it could relate to properties fronting either Dove Street or Pottergate.

The height of natural chalk bears comparison to the archaeological evaluation on 6-12 St Andrew's Street. It may indicate that significant truncation and landscaping has occurred here. The most likely location for cellars, the frontage with Pottergate, had

been affected by the construction of the air raid shelter. It is possible that elements of cellars, perhaps the lowest levels, may survive on the Pottergate frontage backfilled with overburden and unaffected by the present ground works.

Acknowledgements

The author, along with Ben Hobbs and John Percival, undertook the watching brief. Thanks are due to the contractors on site, Mr R Mitchell, Rick and Patrick, for their assistance during the project. The report was illustrated and formatted by Maggie Footitt and edited by David Robertson.

Bibliography

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Appendix 1: Context Summary

Context No.	Category	Description/interpretation
01	Deposit	Modern overburden
02	Masonry	Air raid shelter walls
03	Cut	Construction cut of (02)
04	Deposit	Fill of pit [04]
05	Cut	Pit cut
06	Deposit	Chalk natural

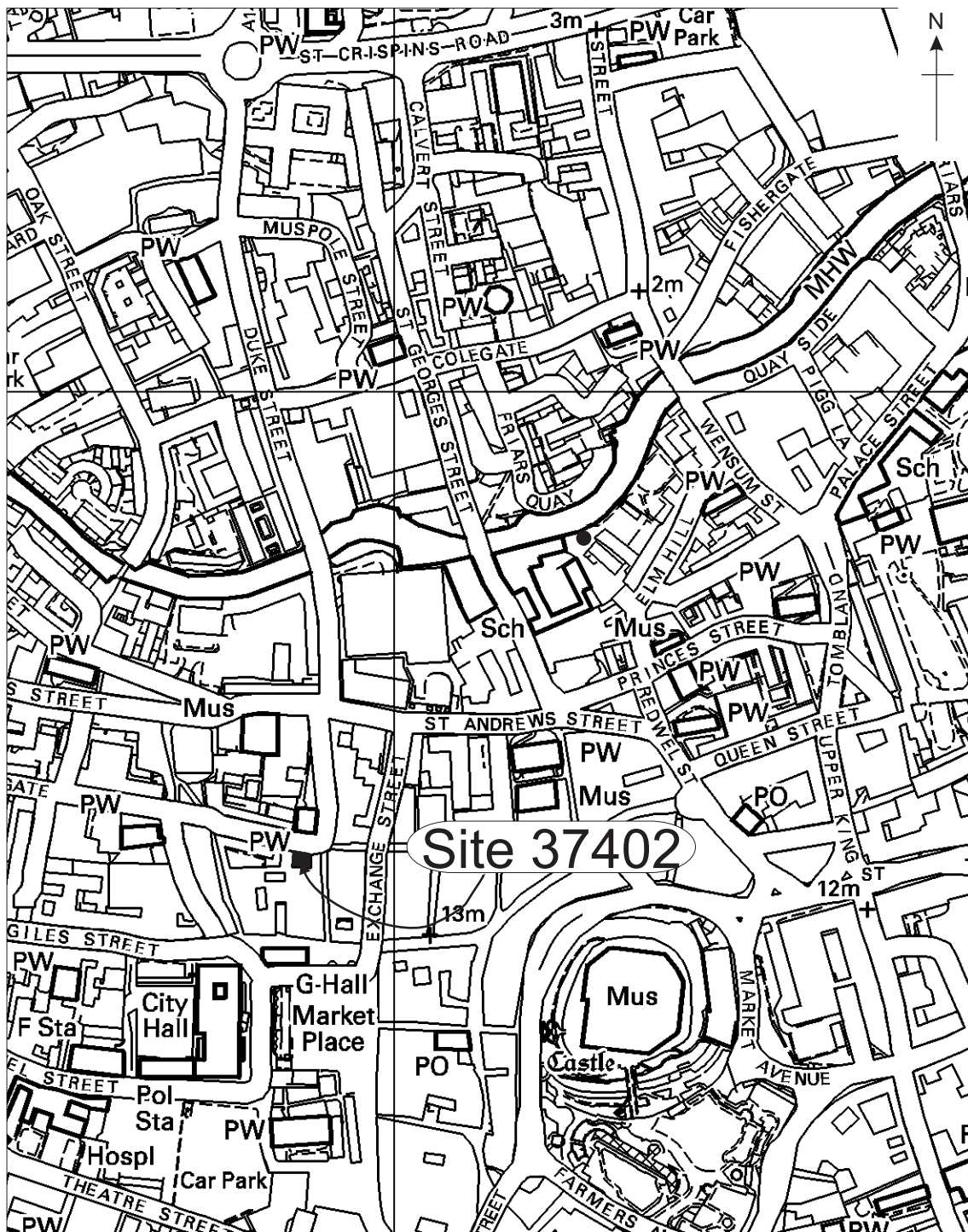


Figure 1. Site location. Scale 1:5,000

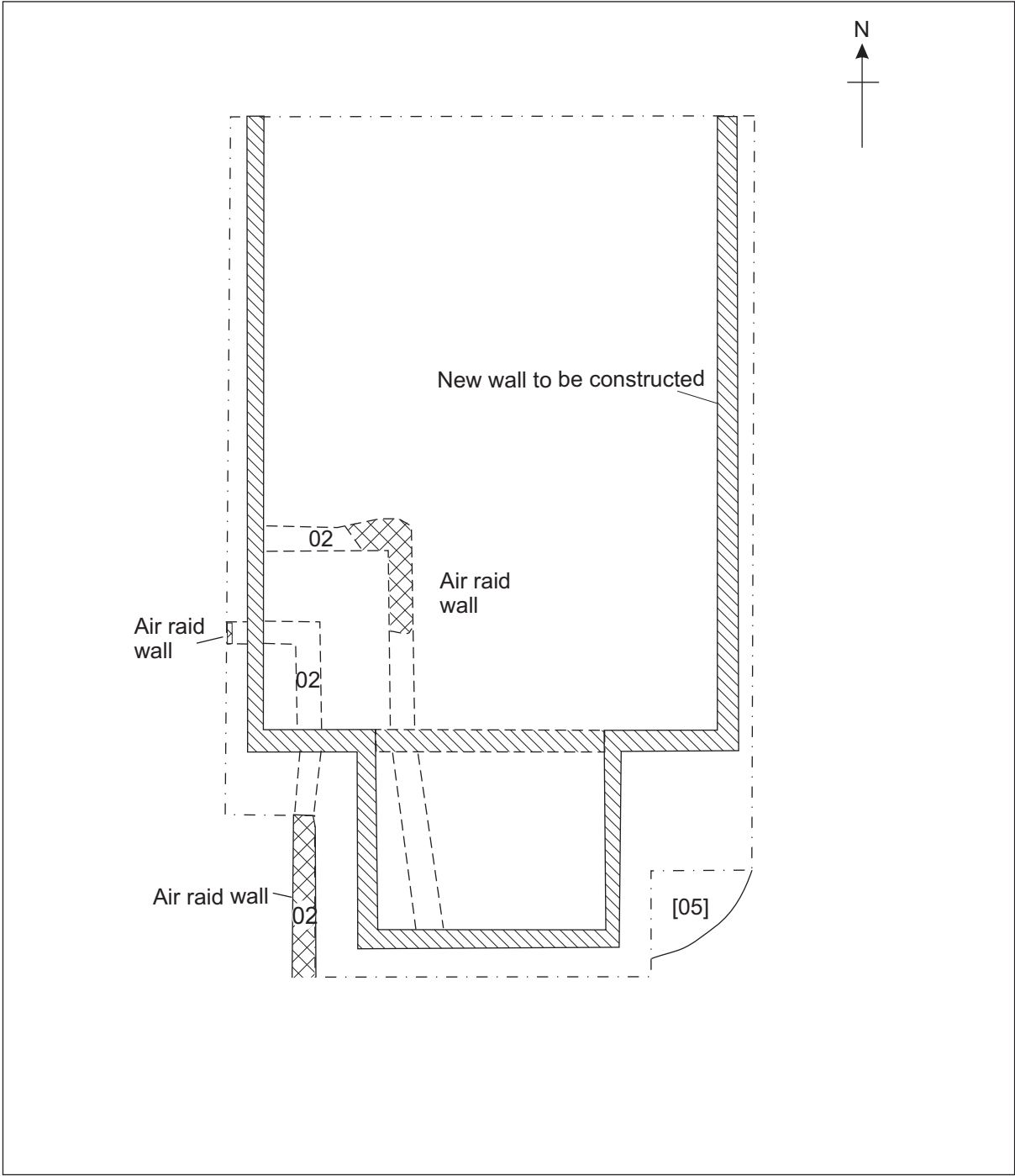
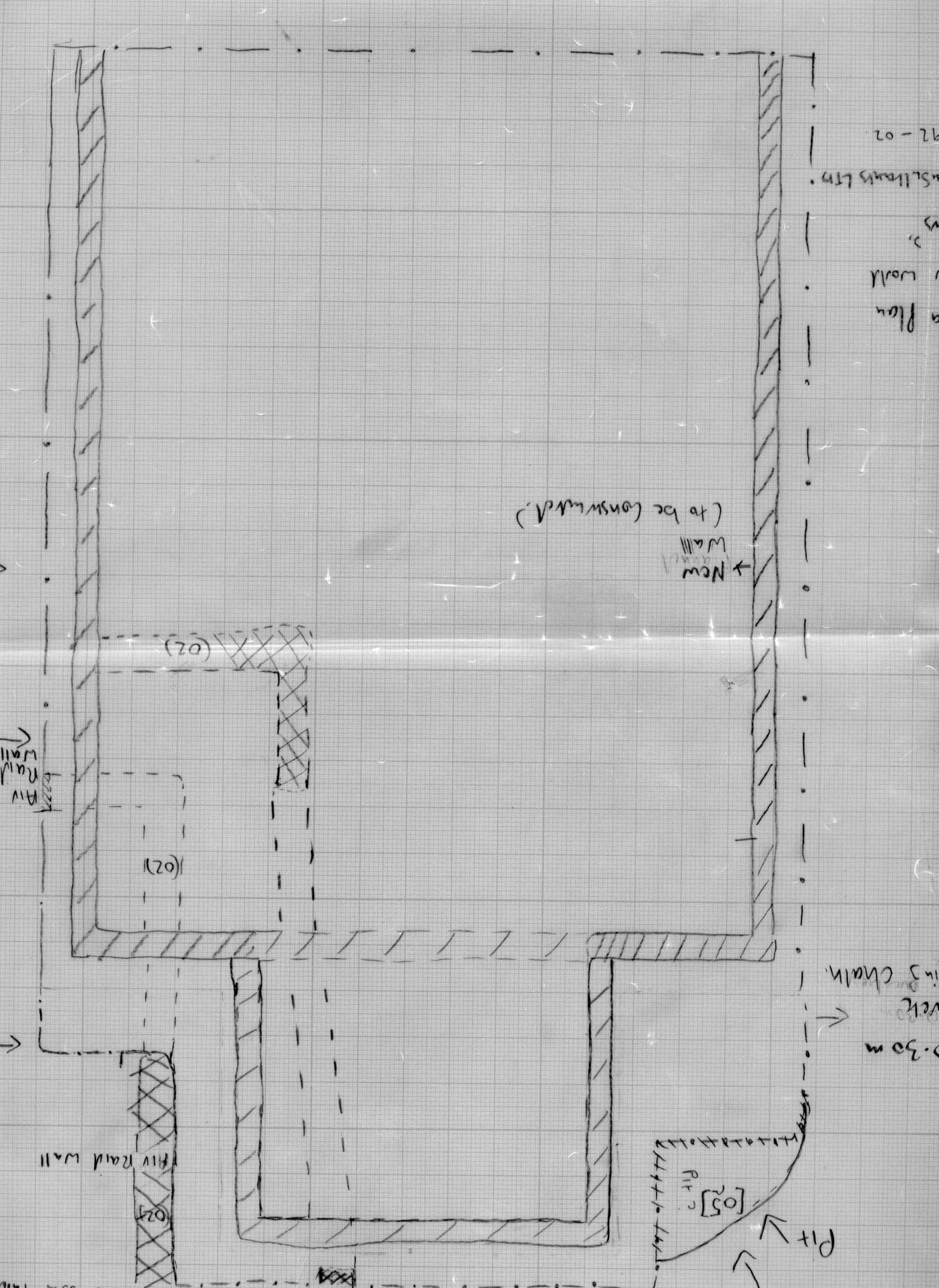


Figure 2. Site plan. Scale 1:100



92-02

St. James Ln.

Plan

(to be conserved.)

New Wall

(02)

(02)

Old Wall

Chain

0.30 m

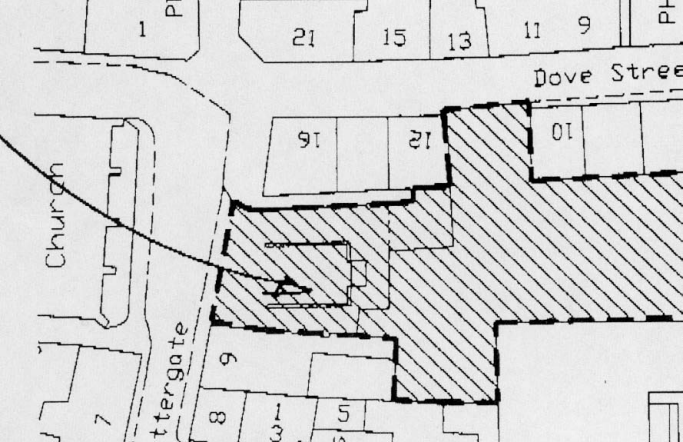
Old Wall

(02)

[05]

Pit?

Pit



1

P

21

15

13

11

9

1

Dove Street

16

21

10

Church

ttergate

9

7

8

1

5