

# **ARCHAEOLOGICAL DESK-BASED ASSESSMENT**

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## **ALBION MALTINGS (LAND BETWEEN KEY STREET AND ALBION WHARF), IPSWICH**

### **Archaeological Desk-Based Assessment and Deposit Modelling Report**

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© November 2004

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# 1 Introduction

Much of the northern side of the Ipswich Wet Dock is subject to Planning Permission for conversion and/or redevelopment for residential use. This regeneration of the waterfront stretches from Neptune Quay to the east almost as far as Stoke Bridge to the west. One of the largest of these sites (undergoing excavation at the time of writing) is the neighbouring Cranfield's Mill. The present site, formerly occupied by Paul's Maltings, will be one of the last plots in the area to see redevelopment.

The Suffolk County Council Archaeology Service (SCCAS hereafter) Field Team has been commissioned by Alan Baxter and Associates on behalf of their client, Knight Developments, to undertake a Desk-Based Assessment. The site is bounded to the north by Key Street, to the east by a lane adjacent to The Old Custom House, to the south by the Wet Dock itself (Albion Wharf) and to the west by Cranfield's Mill (see Fig. 1).

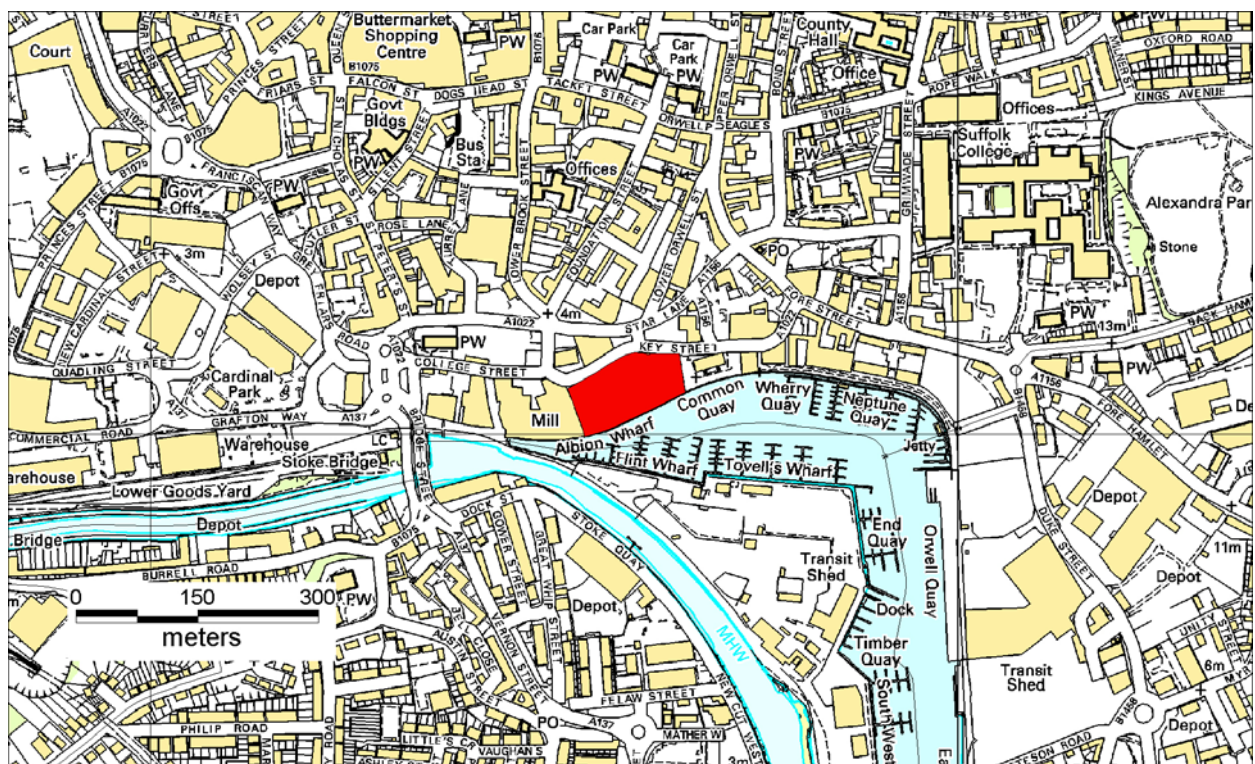


Figure 1. Site location

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## 2 Methodology

This report is principally concerned with the modelling of the archaeological deposits and does not include a specifically targeted documentary search (see *Recommendations* below). For the general purposes of this report this has already been adequately undertaken for the immediate environs of the site (Loader and Breen, 2003; Gill, 2004).

The following sources were examined in order to assess the archaeological potential, history and development of the site:

- The Sites and Monuments Record for Ipswich (including records of actual archaeological interventions in the vicinity of the site)

- Borehole data
- Historic cartographic sources

Given the amount of recent redevelopment activity at surrounding adjacent sites it was not thought necessary to consult primary sources in all cases and other recent Desk-Based Assessments have been summarised where it was deemed appropriate.

No formal building survey or site investigation report was available at the time of writing so a rudimentary basement/floor level survey was undertaken (thanks are due to Tony Bevan of Paul's Malt for arranging access). A series of transects were made from existing benchmarks surrounding the site in order to establish absolute levels Above Ordnance Datum (AOD) of all floor and slab surfaces.

### 3 Results

#### 3.1 SMR data

The SMR for Ipswich is maintained by the County Archaeological Service. For this study SMR entries within a 250m radius of the centre of the site on the northern side of the river have been included and are summarised in Table 1. A graphical representation of the SMR entry locations appears in Figure 2. Further detail of pertinent entries appears in the *Discussion* below.

SMR No.	Address	Description	Nature of deposits
IAS 5302	College Street	Wolsey's Gate	16 <sup>th</sup> Century monument
IAS 5303	Ex-Burton & Sanders, College Street	Excavation for inspection pit (1972)	Septaria walls and 4 skeletons (within medieval Priory of St. Peter & St. Paul)
IAS 5305	Ex-Burton & Sanders, Star Lane/College Street	Archaeological Evaluation (2000)	Middle and Late Saxon occupation, site of Priory of St Peter and St Paul, Wolsey's College. >2m overburden above sands and gravels.
IAS 5402	Star Lane, car parks	SAM designation	
IAS 5504	42-54 Foundation Street	Building works	Ipswich ware etc.
IAS 5505	Lower Brook Street/Foundation Street	Excavation (1988)	Middle Saxon occupation onwards
IAS 5701	Smart Street/Foundation Street	Excavation (1984)	Middle Saxon and later, LS buildings.
IAS 5702	Ex-Art College complex, Smart Street	Monitoring (2000)	
IAS 5801	Corner of Foundation Street/Star Lane	Excavation (1979)	Occupation – Middle/Late Saxon and early medieval. Some residual Romano-British finds. 1.5m overburden over natural gravels – relatively high, dry island.
IAS 5802	St. Mary Quay Churchyard	Drainage works 1980 Trial pit 1987	Tombs and headstones
IAS 5803	Star Lane	Storm Water Relief Drain (1983)	Human remains
IAS 5901	Ex-Wm. Brown's Timber Yard, Key Street	Excavation (1981)	Prehistoric (BA), Saxon, medieval (incl. human skeletal remains) occupation, Post-medieval. Shallow (<1m) overburden.
IAS 5902	Tolly Cobbold Bottling Yard	Excavation (1982)	Saxon, medieval, Post-

	(Star Lane Relief Road)		medieval
IAS 5903	Corner Lower Orwell Street/Key Street	Flint & septaria building – “the Wayside Lodge” (Nov. 1982)	Dated by documents to 1438 – 39
IAS 5904	Paul’s computer store, Fore Street	Thetford ware pits (May 1983)	Late Saxon
IAS 5905	Star Lane extension	Excavation for Storm Water Relief drain (July 1983)	Nothing recorded.
IAS 5906	Paul’s Plc, Key Street	Erection of Reception building	Thetford ware (late Saxon)
IAS 6301	College Street/Foundry Lane (Ex Burton’s Warehouse)	Tide level excavations (1926 – 1958)	Middle and Late Saxon pottery, medieval pottery, animal bone, leather shoes, ship nails. Some well-preserved waterlogged deposits
IAS 6401	East corner of Foundry Lane/College Street	Building work (1857 & 1920)	1857 – Bronze vessel, 2 bronze fibulae & chain 1920 – pair of bone skates (L. Saxon). Reclamation deposits.
IAS 6402	Paul’s Brewery, Albion Wharf	Foundations of brewery (1883)	Roman lamp with dog emblem.
IAS 6403	Cranfield’s Mill	Boreholes for new silo (1980)	Made ground to 4.2m bgl, peat layer at base overlying natural gravel.
IAS 6404	Cranfield’s Mill	Foundation of silo (1981)	Single Ipswich ware potsherd. 3m of river deposits below 1m concrete slab.
IAS 6501	Custom House, Key Street	5x boreholes (1980)	Animal bone, leather, pottery (medieval). 3.5-4m peat/waterlogged deposits overlying gravels.
IAS 6901	Shirehall Yard	Excavation (1959)	See PSIA XXIX 3, 1963
IAS 6902	Shirehall Yard	Small excavation (1976)	Blackfriars – latrine, medieval precinct wall
IAS 6903	Omnibus Depot Garage, Pleasant Row	New inspection pit (1976)	Ipswich ware sherd
IAS 6904	Lower Orwell St/Shirehall Yard	Excavation 1982	Town defences / Blackfriars precinct wall

Table 1: Summary of archaeological information held for the area around Albion Wharf (see Fig. 2)

### 3.2 Geology and topography

The underlying superficial geology in this part of Ipswich consists of sand and gravel drift deposits. Glaciofluvial in origin, these comprise a largely homogenous layer of sub-angular flints in a sand matrix. This deposit has been consistently identified in excavation throughout the southern two-thirds of the town. Beyond these gravels, to the north, the surface geology becomes dominated by impermeable Boulder Till. Drainage water from these created some quite substantial streams that flowed south through the town. Their routes are preserved in the alignment of some of the main north-to-south streets: for example Brook Street and, more relevant to the present site, Orwell Street (see *Discussion* below). Excavation and geotechnical records throughout the town suggest that the topography was initially more undulating, with reclamation activity commencing from as early as the Middle Saxon Period, although extensive levelling only appears to have taken place in the Late Medieval/early Post-medieval periods.

Borehole evidence in this part of the town is quite sparse and the few recorded examples are quite well dispersed. This, combined with the fact that excavation has shown that archaeological evidence for occupation is dense (with widespread deeply cut features) means

that individual boreholes could have given erroneously deep levels for natural drift deposits if unfavourably sited over archaeological features. The borehole data cannot therefore be seen as definitive when any attempt at modelling the topography around the site is made.

Nevertheless, a topographical model of natural deposits in the vicinity of the site has been produced before (Loader and Breen, 2003) and has been reproduced here in Figure 3.

Although work is currently ongoing at the neighbouring Cranfield's Mill site (Gill, 2004; and excavation which was continuing at the time of writing) the findings there have not substantially altered our understanding of the local topography. Work at this site has however suggested a more accurate location for one of the north to south aligned channels and identified that undisturbed natural gravels occur as high as 1.77m AOD just 10m south of the road in the eastern part of the site (figure 4).

### **3.3 Cartographic sources**

Speede's map of 1610, while it clearly shows the site as occupied dock-frontage, is of insufficient scale or detail to enable any significant conclusions to be drawn. Consequently it has not been illustrated.

An extract from John Ogilby's map of 1674 is reproduced in Figure 5. This shows almost all the Key Street frontage occupied by buildings. Apart from the far eastern end of the site (which appears completely filled with a range of buildings around a central courtyard) the area behind the street frontage is largely open, presumably occupied by dock-front yards. Property boundaries within the site are not that clear but it appears that five main blocks are indicated, each with a principal street front building and yards behind, sometimes occupied by smaller ancillary structures. A possible north to south aligned thoroughfare appears to bisect the site almost exactly at its centre. It is notable that the alignment of the river/quayside appears different to the present day in the western half of the site, where it is slightly further north – perhaps as much as 30m further north at the far western edge of the site.

An extract from Joseph Pennington's map of 1778 is reproduced in Figure 6. This indicates that development had been substantial in the century since Ogilby's first detailed map of the area was produced. It shows that almost all of the Key Street frontage was still occupied but by the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century much of the largely open 'yard' area along the river front had also been infilled. A central north to south aligned thoroughfare is still suggested by Pennington's map. By this time the river frontage in the western part of the site appears to have advanced south to its present day position.

White's map of 1867 shows few changes to the site and is not reproduced here. It is significant in that it is the first detailed map to follow the construction of the Wet Dock in 1842. It shows the present day alignment of Albion Wharf and the Custom House (built in 1845) to the east of the site for the first time.

An extract from the First Edition Ordnance Survey map of 1884 is shown in Figure 7. For the first time the nature of the occupation is confirmed, with 'Malthouses' indicated across the site. A more complex arrangement of individual buildings is shown, including four annotated as public houses. A central north to south alley still appears to be a feature of the site. Some cellaring is indicated and although perhaps not completely reliable this has been integrated into the basement survey below (see Section 3.4).

The Second Edition Ordnance Survey map of 1904 (extract shown in Fig. 8) shows the site to be even more densely occupied by buildings than it is today. The two central buildings (separated by a narrow alley) are recognisable as those that still exist on the site. Indeed the

open yard that occupies the north-western part of the site was only created in the 1960s when the buildings in that part of the site were demolished (Tony Bevan, *pers comm*).

The Third Edition Ordnance Survey map of 1927 has not been reproduced as it shows only one significant change - the large silo in the western central part of the site, which still stands today, and was constructed *c.* 1910 (Tony Bevan, *pers comm*).

### **3.4 Basement and floor level survey**

A relatively small number of low level areas/basements associated with the extant buildings were recorded. These are shown in Figure 9. Also shown in Figure 9 are the projected locations of cellars indicated on the First Edition Ordnance Survey map. It is recognised that the accuracy of their location is uncertain and that their depth is unknown. The annotated modern examples are as follows:

- A. Very deep (0.22m AOD floor level) catchment area for gravity-fed grain from hoppers in large silo.
- B. Grain delivery chute and equipment (1.24m AOD).
- C. Low floor area (3.32m AOD). Notably lower than rest of the building it occupies but not significantly different level from yard surface outside.
- D. Reduced level (2.60m AOD) of concrete-walled bund surrounding former oil storage tanks.
- E. ‘Sub-basement’ of central warehouse building. One of the extant 19<sup>th</sup> century buildings, the upper portion of its windows are visible at street level. Most of the area’s floor level is at 2.45m AOD, although a smaller section in the north-west corner (former malting ovens) is lower, at 2.35m AOD.
- F. Deep (1.45m AOD) narrow channel that houses belt-fed grain movement system. Now disused and flooded. The area marked on Figure 8 is an approximation only, its full extent is only indicated by well-dispersed inspection holes, many of which are obscured by modern machinery, fixtures *etc.*
- G. Base for hopper (2.42m AOD).
- H. Weighbridge in the outside yard (base at 1.72m AOD)

These levels, along with the principal levels of other ‘ground floors’ and outside slabs are shown in Figure 10.

Little could be discerned about the construction techniques and their likely impact from inspection of the extant buildings. Substantial vertical supports were notably absent from all but the easternmost silo building (see Figure 10 for pillar locations) at ground floor level. These could have corresponding pads below ground, though their dimensions and depth are unknown. The other buildings presumably stand on substantial concrete rafts (up to 1m thick), as is the case with buildings on the neighbouring Cranfield’s Mill site.



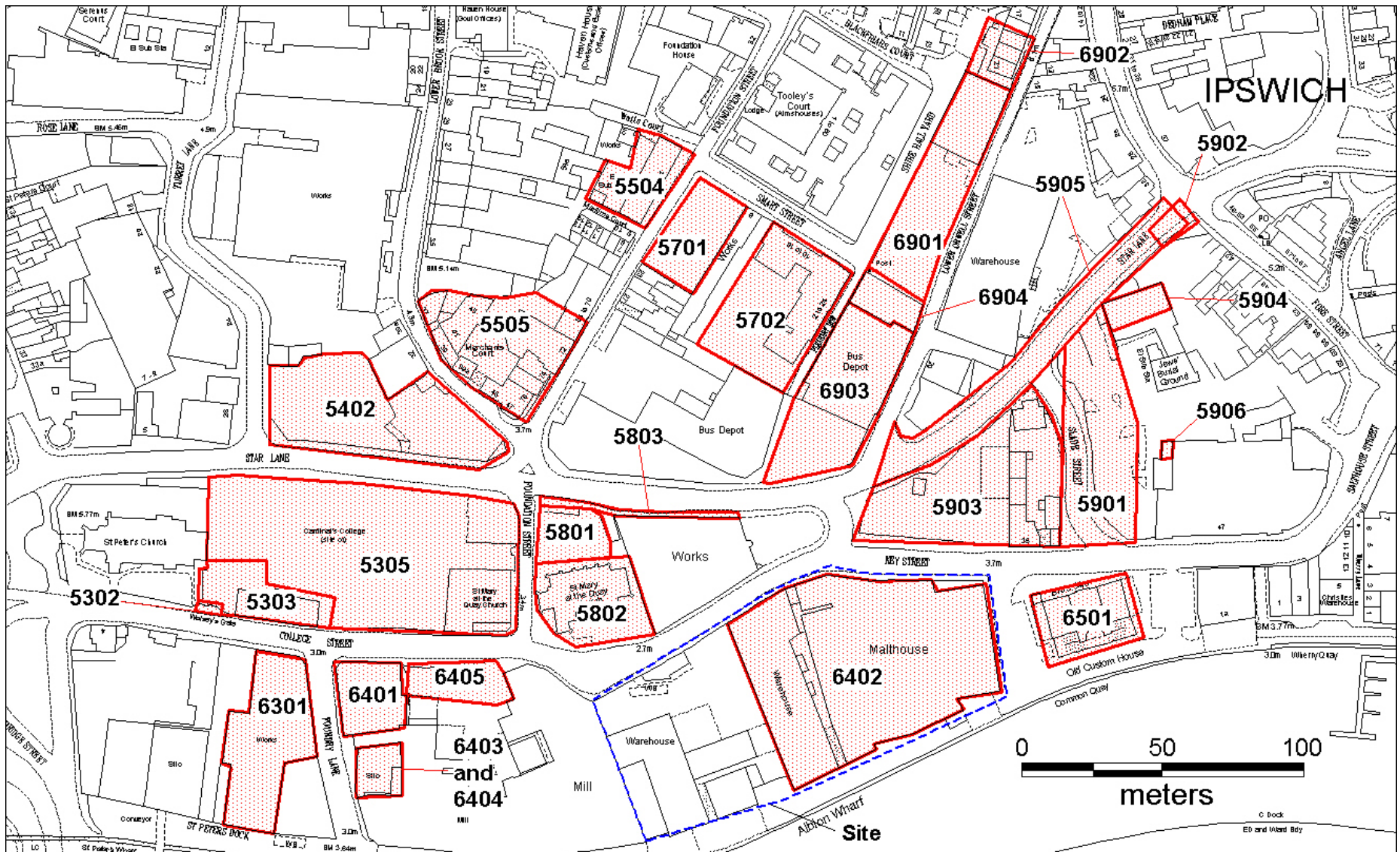


Figure 2. Site location and relevant (250m radius) SMR entries.  
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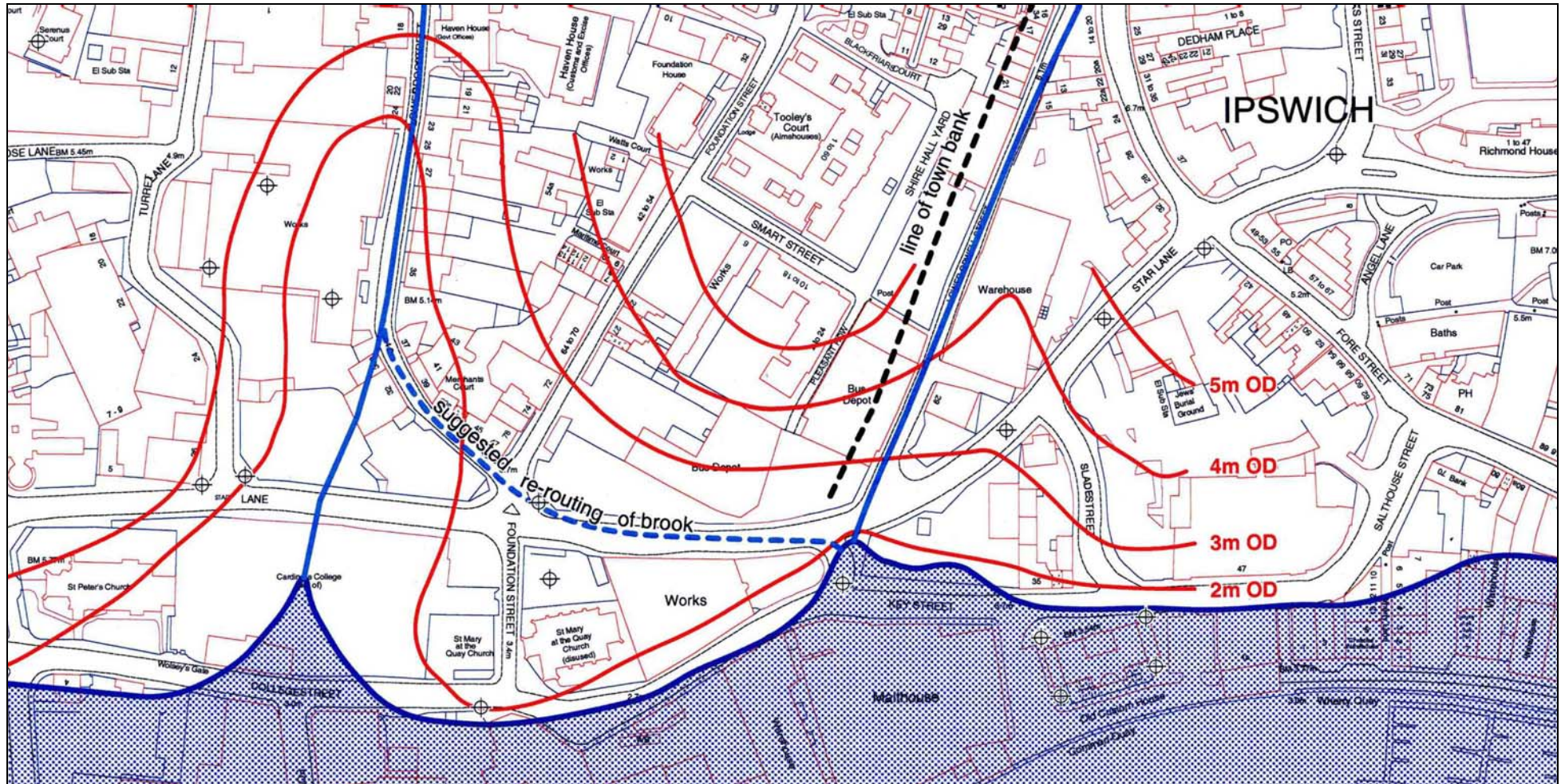


Figure 3. Topography of natural sand and gravel deposits (after Loader and Breen, 2003; ☼ = borehole location)  
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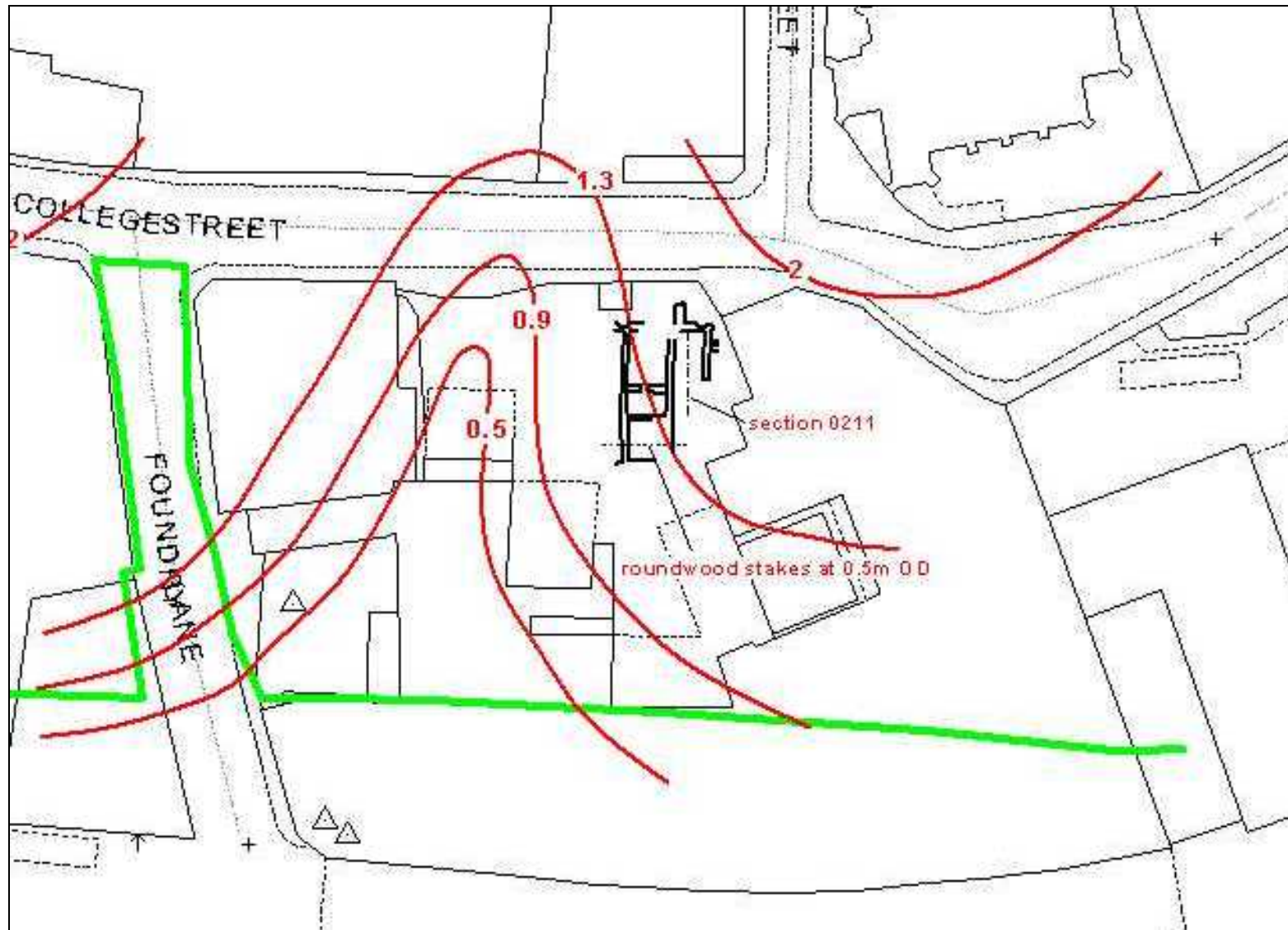


Figure 4. Topography of natural subsoil at Cranfield's Mill based on borehole and archaeological excavation data

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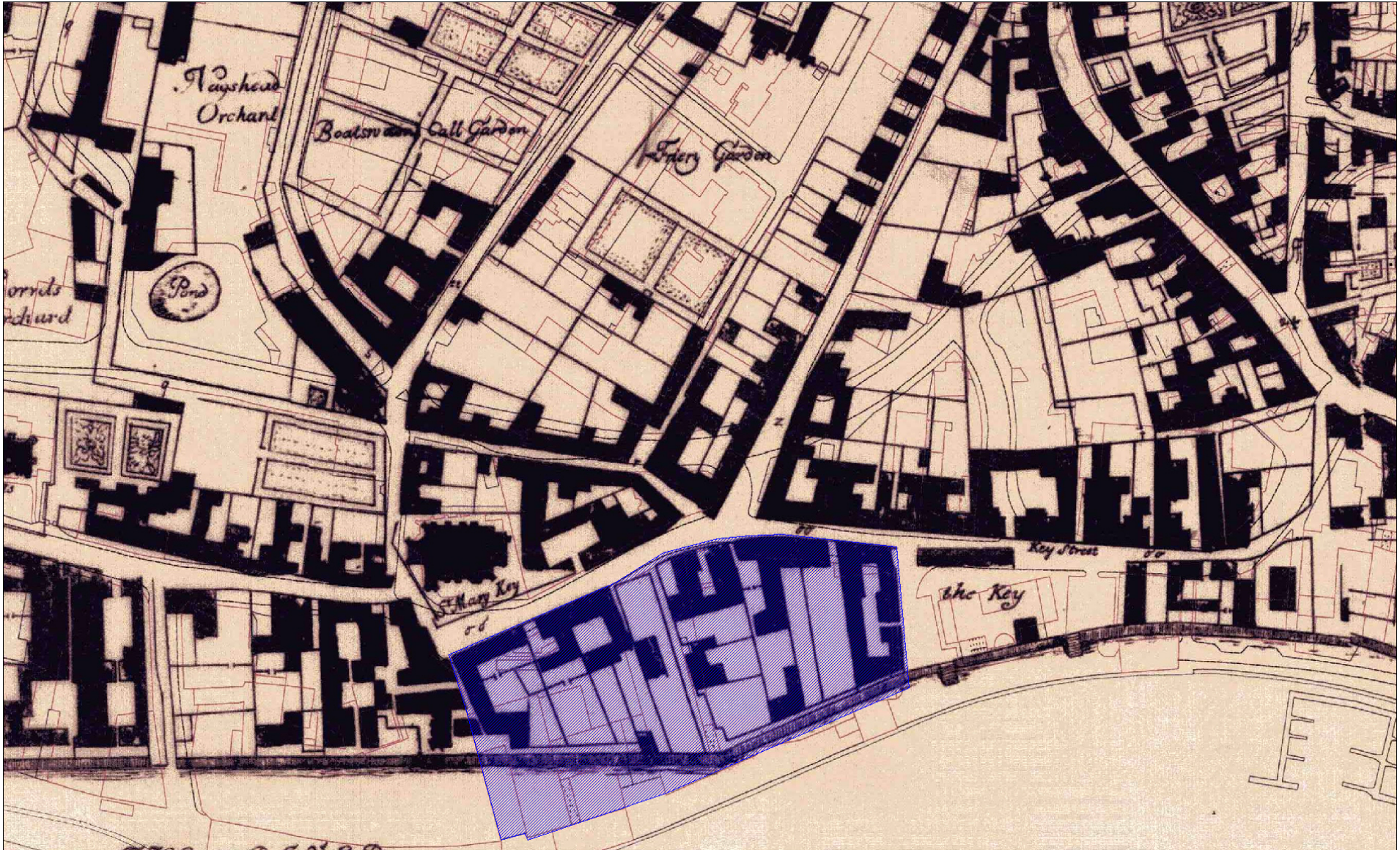


Figure 5. Ogilby's map (1674)





Figure 6. Pennington's map (1778)



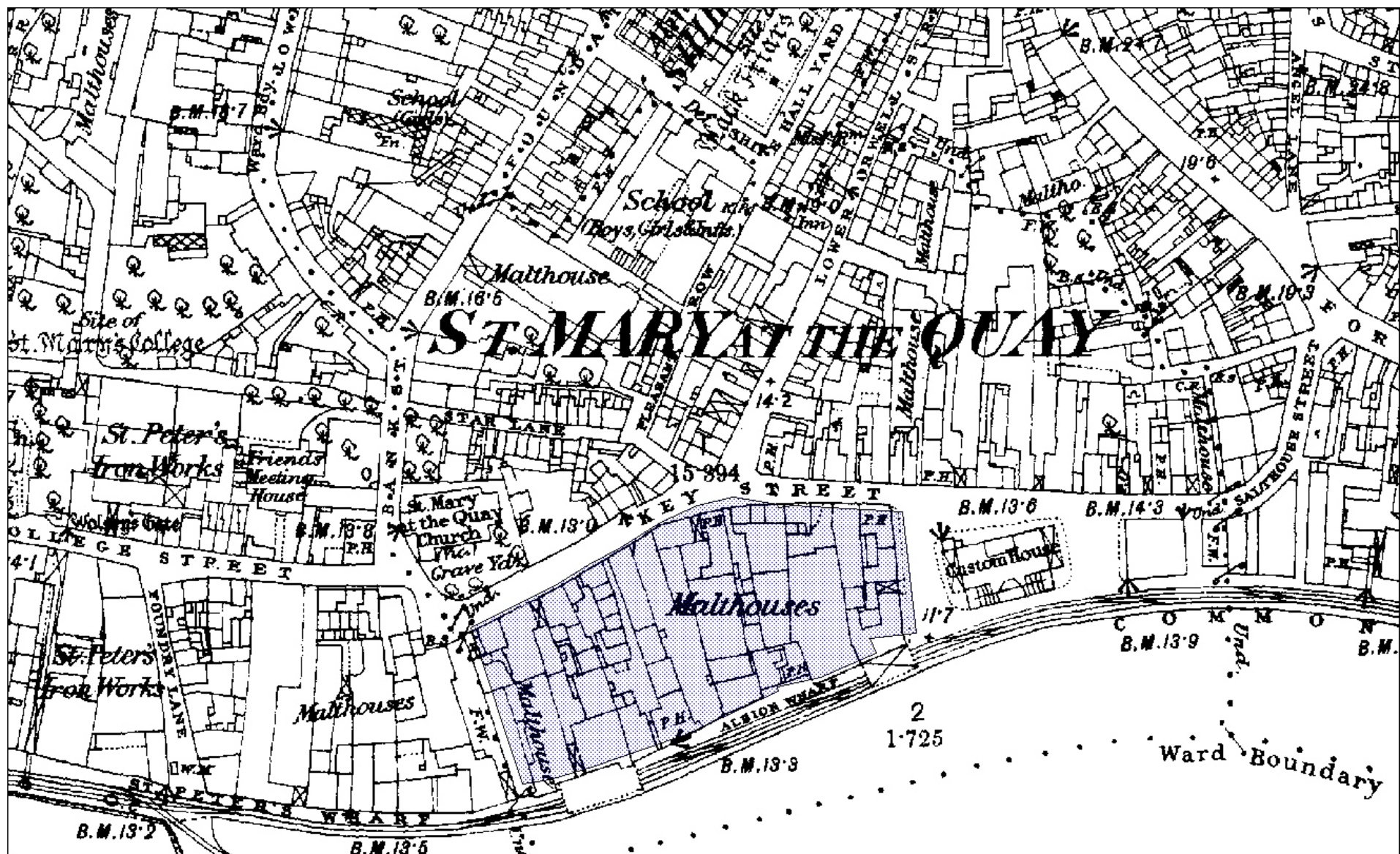


Figure 7. First Edition Ordnance Survey Map (1884)

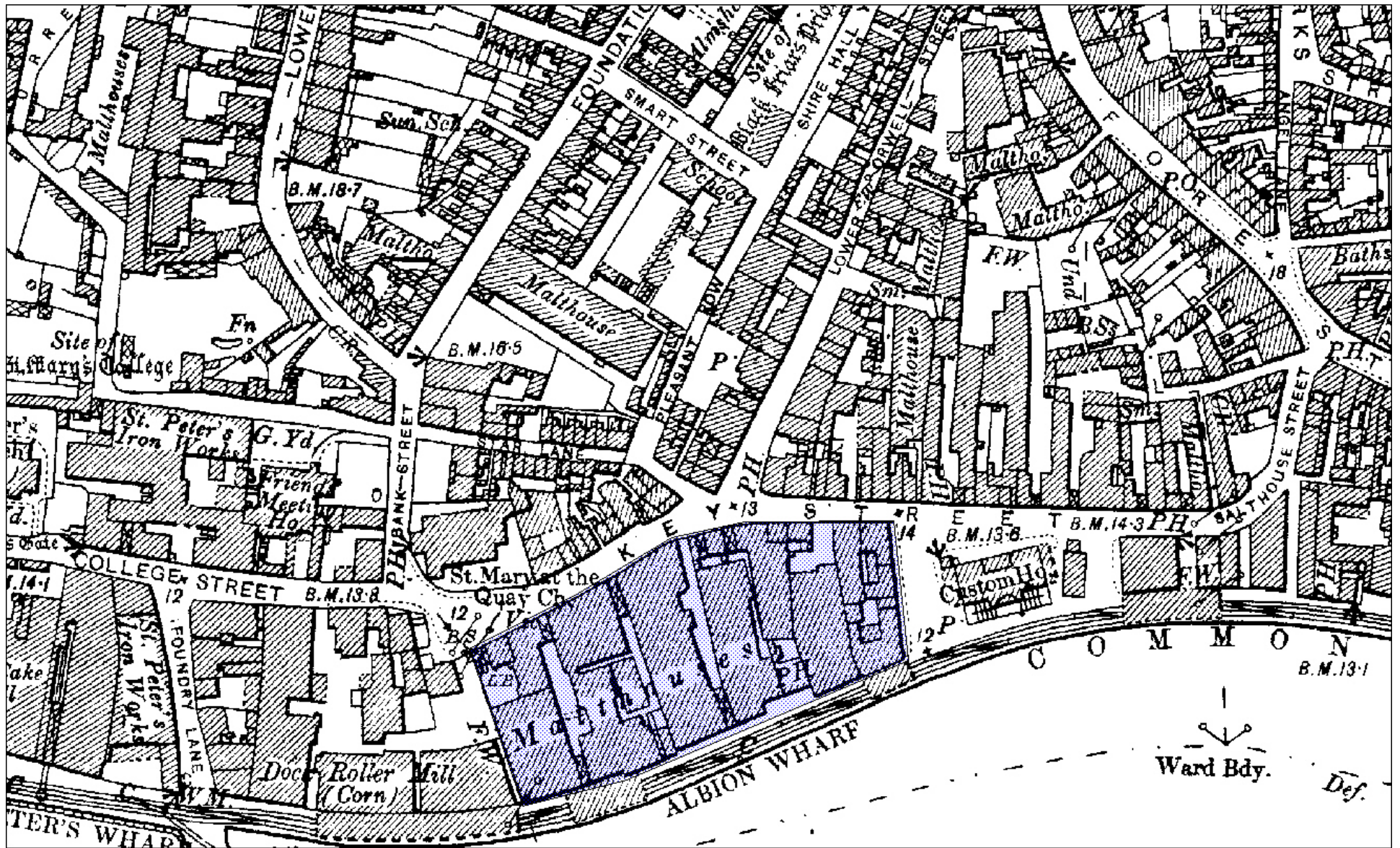


Figure 8. Second Edition Ordnance Survey map (1904)





Figure 9. Cellar/low level locations  
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Figure 10. Principal floor and slab levels

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## 4 Discussion

Two strands of evidence need to be considered separately before any general conclusions can be drawn.

### 4.1 The archaeological potential

The site has little potential for the preservation of prehistoric deposits. These are generally rare in the core of the town and in this case only two sites (IAS 5901 and 5902, *c.* 40m and *c.* 150m to the north-east respectively) within a 250m radius produced any evidence for prehistoric activity. In both cases no significant cut features were encountered and the only evidence comprised residually occurring finds.

The evidence for Roman occupation in this part of the town is enigmatic. While the nearest well defined area of occupation lies some way (over 1km) to the west at Handford Road, there are a number of SMR entries in the vicinity of the site that have produced Roman finds. At IAS 5801 (just to the north of St Mary Quay Church) a number of residual bronze coins were recorded. Two other notable Roman finds were made during Victorian works along the reclaimed waterfront. At IAS 6401 (in the north-west corner of the neighbouring Cranfield's Mill site) a bronze vessel and two brooches were recovered. Also at IAS 6402 (during the construction in 1883 of the foundations of the brewery), which lies within the site, a bronze lamp, a brooch and some pottery was recovered. The ongoing work at Cranfield's Mill had also produced some residual Roman material (including Samian pottery) at the time of writing. In addition there is anecdotal evidence for part of a Roman 'bathhouse' being seen during the 1960s demolition work in the north-western part of the site, but this is unconfirmed.

There is widespread evidence of Anglo-Saxon occupation around the site, as can be seen from the catalogue of SMR entries (Section 3.1). However, the location of the present site must be considered within the context of the Anglo-Saxon town's topography. The eastern edge of the main occupation is indicated by the 10<sup>th</sup> century town ditch, which has been identified in two excavations (IAS 4801, IAS 6904) parallel to, and just west of, Lower Orwell Street. The southern extent of this boundary and its relationship to any waterfront remains unknown but it is likely that the eastern half of the site lies outside the formal edge of the town. Similarly, the proximity of the site to the river must be taken into account. Topographical modelling (see Figure 3) suggests that a north to south aligned channel may run through part of the site, which could lessen the potential for occupation evidence in its immediate vicinity. The nature of the Anglo-Saxon waterfront, particularly whether it involved any substantial formal enwharfment, is unclear (a line of undated stakes has recently been observed at 0.5m AOD at Cranfield's Mill however). Reclamation activity may have started as early as the Middle Saxon period, as indicated by excavation close to Stoke Bridge (IAS 6202). Isolated Anglo-Saxon features have also been recorded at the Neighbouring Cranfield's Mill, where the natural subsoil had survived substantial medieval or later truncation. On balance it would seem likely that some Anglo-Saxon activity could be anticipated, particularly in the western part of the site, but it that it would be more peripheral in nature than the well-stratified occupation recorded at nearby sites further to the north such as Cardinal Works (IAS 5305).

The potential for medieval deposits could be said to be much the same as for the Anglo-Saxon period. The site's location in relation to the main focus of the town remains the same, at least for the early medieval period, as the AD 1204 town bank (with a more substantial ditch) overlies the Anglo-Saxon town ditch mentioned above. Again, the nature of the medieval waterfront in the vicinity of the site is unclear but accelerated reclamation activity might be anticipated, possibly associated with a late medieval quay wall, as encountered at Neptune

Quay (Boulter, 2000). It is possible that structural remains could be encountered (a substantial building of late medieval/early post-medieval date was encountered in the ongoing excavations at Cranfield's Mill) in the northern part of the site. Indeed documents dating back as far as 1315 suggest that buildings adjoined the southern boundary of St Mary Quay churchyard (Loader and Breen, 2003), which would have extended further south than it does today following widening of the road.

Post-medieval occupation on the site was substantial, at least by the 17<sup>th</sup> century when the river edge appears to have reached a similar alignment to its present day post-Wet Dock position. Excavation at Neptune Quay (IAS 6601 – *c.* 300m to the east) demonstrated that there reclamation accelerated rapidly to fill the space behind a new quay wall (Boulter, 2000). Much of the present site from the 17<sup>th</sup> century on appears to have been almost completely occupied by malthouse buildings (see Figures 5-8) right up to the present day.

## 4.2 Deposit model

Borehole data from a site investigation report was not available at the time of writing. Given this shortcoming the deposit modelling attempted relies on information from the neighbouring Cranfield's Mill site (Figure 4) and a topographical model for a wider area around the site (Figure 3).

Natural subsoil has been encountered as shallow as 1.77m AOD (at the northern end of section 0211 – see Figure 4) at Cranfields Mill. It has also been found at between 1.55 – 1.8m AOD at the Cardinal Works site (Boulter, 2000). This suggests that the slope of the foreshore only becomes pronounced *c.* 20m south of the modern line of Key Street. The level of natural gravels at the southern end of the Cranfield's Mill site drops to well below 1m AOD either side of the suspected channel and a similar degree of slope could be anticipated on the present site. Another channel has been suggested to lie near the centre of the present site (see Figure 3), following the alignment of Lower Orwell Street.

At Cranfield's Mill archaeological deposits lay immediately beneath the slab in the northern yard at a height of *c.* 2.6m AOD. If these levels prevail on the present site then substantial survival of archaeological deposits could be expected along much of the Key Street frontage, with perhaps as much as 0.8m of archaeological deposits beneath *c.* 0.6m of modern overburden. Substantial truncation to these deposits is likely to have been caused by the basement areas in the northern part of the site (Areas A, E, H and the northern part of F in Figure 9). The degree of truncation caused by 19<sup>th</sup> century cellaring and earlier buildings along the street frontage is unknown, but is likely to be considerable (see Figure 9 for conjectured early cellar locations). Outside of these areas good archaeological survival can be anticipated: even if the very thick concrete rafts employed at Cranfield's Mill were also present on the site (see Section 3.4), they are unlikely to have destroyed all deposits down to the level of the natural gravels (see Figure 9).

Given the likely slope of the natural gravels and the substantial depth of overlying reclamation deposits, which could be as deep as 2.5m in the southern parts of the site, none of the other low lying areas (B, C, D, G and most of F) are likely to cause significant damage to anything other than comparatively late reclamation deposits. It is not yet known how far south important (in this context this could be considered as late medieval or earlier) evidence for enwharfment or occupation extends beneath the substantial later reclamation dumping. If such remains are present sealed beneath considerable depths of reclamation deposits they are likely to be very well preserved.



### 4.3 Conclusions

The available evidence indicates that the site can be divided into two broad areas (Figure 11).

Area A is likely to contain significant evidence of occupation and wharf-front activity of Anglo-Saxon and later date, with a lower potential for Roman remains. These would most likely be found at a relatively shallow, and vulnerable, depth (higher than *c.* 1.5m AOD). Archaeological deposits in this area have probably been subject to a degree of truncation caused by later construction and cellaring along the Key Street frontage. The extent of this damage is currently unknown and needs to be established.

Area B will be characterised in large part by substantial reclamation deposits, the bulk of which will be of post-medieval date. However there is also the potential for earlier activity in the form of enwharfment features/structures to be sealed at substantial depth, and therefore protected from later truncation, beneath these reclamation deposits. It is highly likely that these, if present, would be preserved in excellent condition. The waterlogged conditions that would be encountered at lower depths in this area are likely to result in excellent finds preservation (of wooden and leather objects in particular), which would have a post-excavation cost implication.

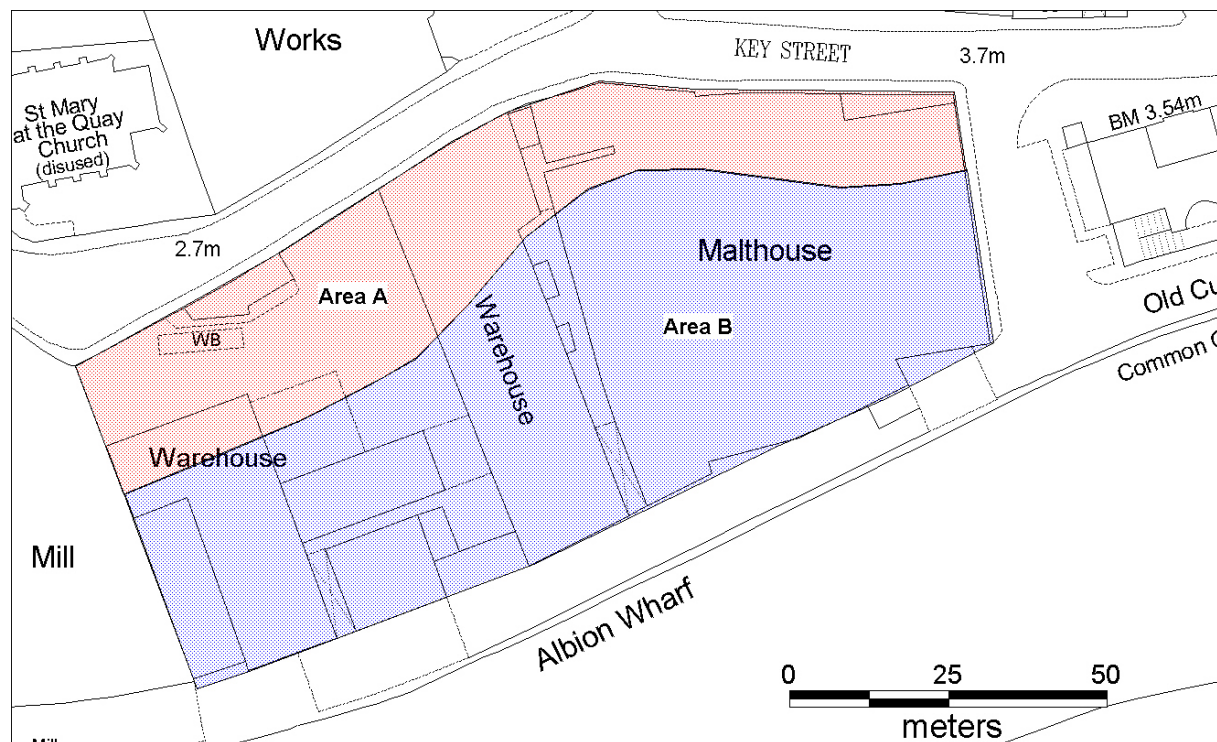


Figure 11. Areas of archaeological potential

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## 5 Recommendations

It is recognised that in this case further documentary research on the historic use of the site would be advantageous. This has proved particularly useful at the neighbouring Cranfield's Mill site, with records of the former 'Bigot's Quay' on the site extending well into the medieval period (Gill, 2004). Similarly rich sources relating to the present site are anticipated.

At the time of writing the site was largely occupied by substantial buildings. However the yard in the north-western corner of the site presents an opportunity for a number of significant

questions to be addressed by trial trench evaluation prior to any demolition, as its position affords access to both Areas A and B.

Two trial trenches are recommended:

- **Trench 1.** A small (10m by 2m) trench in the north-western corner of the yard would enable the location and extent of 19<sup>th</sup> century cellaring (as indicated on the First Edition Ordnance Survey map) and the degree of associated truncation to be evaluated. The type, date and depth of any untruncated archaeological deposits could also be established close to the street frontage.
- **Trench 2.** A longer (40m x 2m) trench perpendicular to the street frontage would enable the nature, date and depth of apparently untruncated archaeological deposits close to the street frontage to be established. It would also be able to indicate how far back from this frontage any evidence for occupation or enwharfement extends. The reclamation deposits anticipated in Area B could be characterised and their depth established to provide a fuller picture of the site's earlier topographic setting.

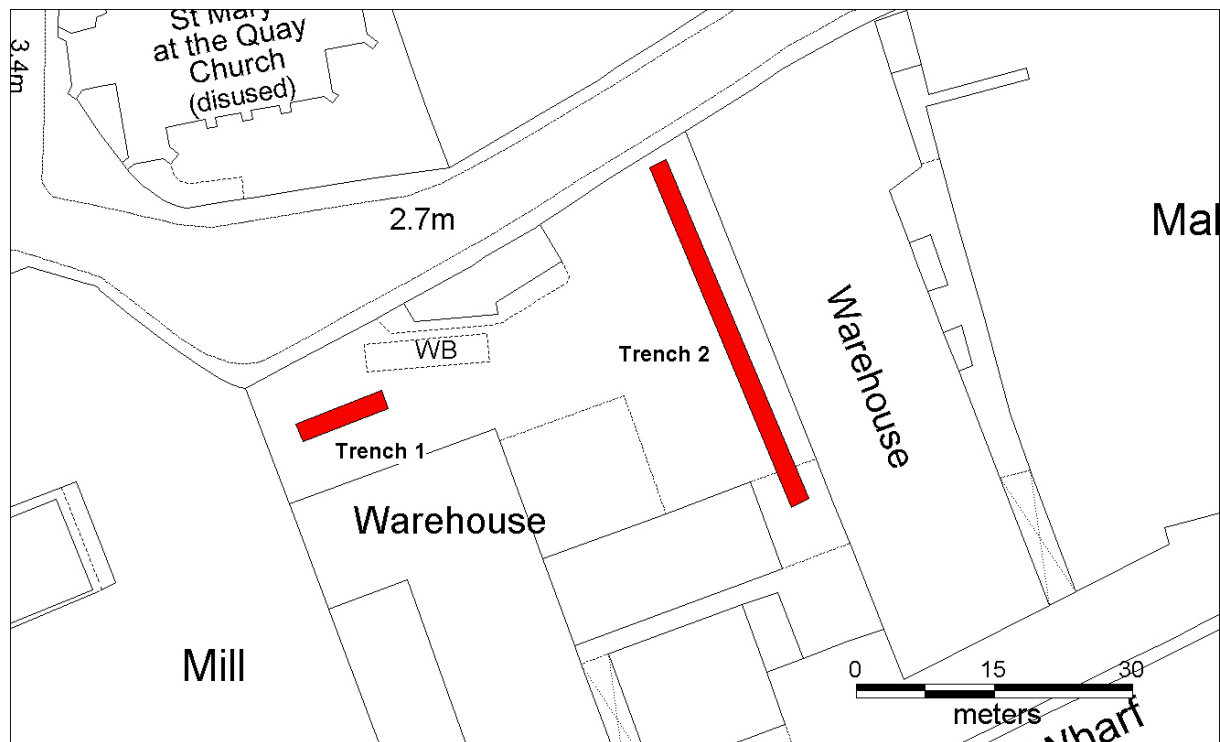


Figure 12. Recommended trial trench locations

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This would enable 100m<sup>2</sup> (slightly more than 1% of the site's total area) to be evaluated. It is recognised that this would only examine the western half of the site. However if the results were used in conjunction with later borehole/test-pit data<sup>1</sup> from a site investigation report then it is hoped that an adequate model of surviving archaeological deposits could be built up, sufficient for a mitigation strategy to be devised.

## References

Boulter, S, 2000, *Neptune Quay, Ipswich (IAS 6601). Record of an Archaeological Excavation*, SCCAS Report No. 2000/44

<sup>1</sup> Which would, for example, enable the presence/absence and location of any north-south channel to be determined in the eastern part of the site.

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Report No. **2004/158**

Rhodri Gardner (SCCAS), for Alan Baxter and Associates, November 2004.

**Disclaimer**

Any opinions expressed in this report about the need for further archaeological work are those of the Field Projects Division alone. The need for further work will be determined by the Local Planning Authority and its archaeological advisors when a planning application is registered. Suffolk County Council's archaeological contracting service cannot accept responsibility for inconvenience caused to clients should the Planning Authority take a different view to that expressed in the report.