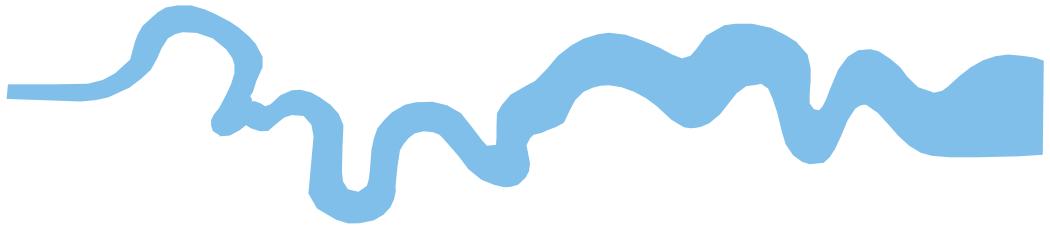


T V A S



NORTH MIDLANDS

**36 - 38 High Street, Whitchurch,
Shropshire**

An Archaeological Watching Brief

by Gareth Davey

Site Code: HSW17/139

(SJ 5412 4158)

36 - 38 High Street, Whitchurch, Shropshire

An Archaeological Watching Brief For New Park Commercial

by Gareth Davey

Thames Valley Archaeological Services Ltd.

HSW 17/139

August 2017

Summary

Site name: 36 - 38 High Street, Whitchurch, Shropshire

Grid reference: SJ 5412 4158

Site activity: Watching Brief

Date and duration of project: 3rd –10th July 2017

Project manager: Steve Ford

Site supervisor: Gareth Davey

Site code: HSW 17/139

Summary of results: Ground reduction for the construction of a new extension was monitored but no deposits of archaeological interest were exposed.

Location of archive: The archive is presently held at TVAS Stoke-on-Trent and will be deposited in Shropshire Museum or the Archaeology Data Service.

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www.tvas.co.uk/reports/reports.asp.*

Report edited/checked by: Steve Ford ✓ 31.08.17 Steve Preston ✓ 31.08.17

36 - 38 High Street, Whitchurch, Shropshire An Archaeological Watching Brief

By Gareth Davey

Report 17/139

Introduction

This report details the results of an archaeological watching brief carried out at 36 - 38 High Street, Whitchurch, Shropshire, (SJ 5412 4158) (Fig 1). The work was commissioned by Mr David Rose of New Park Commercials, 47 Bury New Road, Prestwich, Manchester, M25 9JY.

Planning consent, (16/05526/FUL) has been granted from North Shropshire District Council for remodelling, remedial and extension works at the Grade II listed building. The consent is subject to conditions (12 and 14) which require an archaeological watching brief and building recording. This report documents the results of the archaeological watching brief. This is in accordance with the Department for Communities and Local Governments *National Planning Policy Framework* (NPPF 2012, para 141).

The fieldwork was undertaken by Gareth Davey on 3rd and 10th July 2017 and the site code is HSW 17/139. The archive is presently held at TVAS Stoke-on-Trent and will be deposited in Shropshire Museum or the Archaeology Data Service.

Location, topography and geology

The area requiring watching brief lies to the rear of 36-38 which is located on the south-western side, halfway along the High Street which is central to Whitchurch town (Fig. 2). The site lies at approximately 100m above Ordnance Datum and the underlying geology is recorded as Wilkesley Halite Member stone and mudstone with overlying superficial deposits of Devensian Glaciofluvial deposits of sand and gravel (BGS, 2017).

Archaeological Background

The archaeological background of Whitchurch has recently been documented in detail (Buteux 2005). In summary the settlement of Whitchurch has early Roman origins in the mid- to late 1st century AD as a fort on Watling Street, the primary route between Chester and Wroxeter. The settlement developed and spread southwards on the site of the fort and continued to develop with a ditch and bank enclosure and latterly further walls. The town is thought to have been occupied into the 4th century before it abandonment.

Although Watling Street saw continued use throughout the Saxon and medieval periods, and there were a number of small settlements in the area, there is no archaeological evidence of settlement at Whitchurch prior to the 11th century. A castle is first mentioned in 1199 but was likely constructed around 1087. A church south east

of the castle was also constructed at this time. The medieval settlement may have originated in the late 11th century but archaeological evidence indicates that it was certainly in existence by the 12th century. This early settlement was likely laid out on either side of the High Street on the high ground south of the castle. During this time, Whitchurch served as a market centre for agricultural produce and was also involved in the salt trade from at least the 13th century. The town continued to prosper and expanded throughout the 14th century, expanding over and beyond the former defences, ditch and bank.

This prosperity continued throughout the post-medieval period and the population continued to increase. It is estimated that the population of Whitchurch was c 3000 in the 1670s. During the civil war Whitchurch was home to a royalist garrison and small-scale fighting occurred around the town but was subsequently captured by Parliamentary forces in May 1643. By the end of the 17th century Whitchurch was referred to as "a large market town" and "a wealthy market town and a great thoroughfare".

The 18th century saw further development of Whitchurch as a coaching town on the road from Shrewsbury, leading to an increase in accommodations and provisions for travellers. In 1808, Whitchurch joined the Ellesmere Canal and continued as a market town into the 19th century, largely for livestock but also leather working.

The proposal site is occupied by a house originally constructed in 1677 and remodelled in the late 18th century. It has been the subject of a separate building recording report (Davey 2017).

Methodology

The purpose of the watching brief was to excavate and record any archaeological deposits affected by the works. This involved the archaeological monitoring of areas of intrusive groundworks, in particular any overburden stripping and digging of the foundations. Where archaeological features were certainly or probably present, or where the archaeological potential is uncertain, the stripped areas were to be cleaned using appropriate hand tools, and archaeological features and deposits exposed and threatened by the development were to be excavated by hand to satisfy the aims of the brief. Spoil heaps were to be monitored for finds.

Results

All groundworks were undertaken using a mini-digger fitted with a toothless bucket. The foundations for the new extension were to be constructed on piled foundations which required initial ground reduction before the new floor could be constructed at the same level as the current building. In the first instance a former extension

was demolished. For the groundworks demolition rubble was first cleared from the surface, then the area was reduced by approximately 0.6m (Fig. 3).

The stratigraphy observed consisted of a layer of demolition rubble 0.1m thick overlying a soft brown loam containing the occasional brick fragment down to the bottom of the stripped area (Fig. 4). The natural geology nor any archaeological horizons were exposed.

Finds

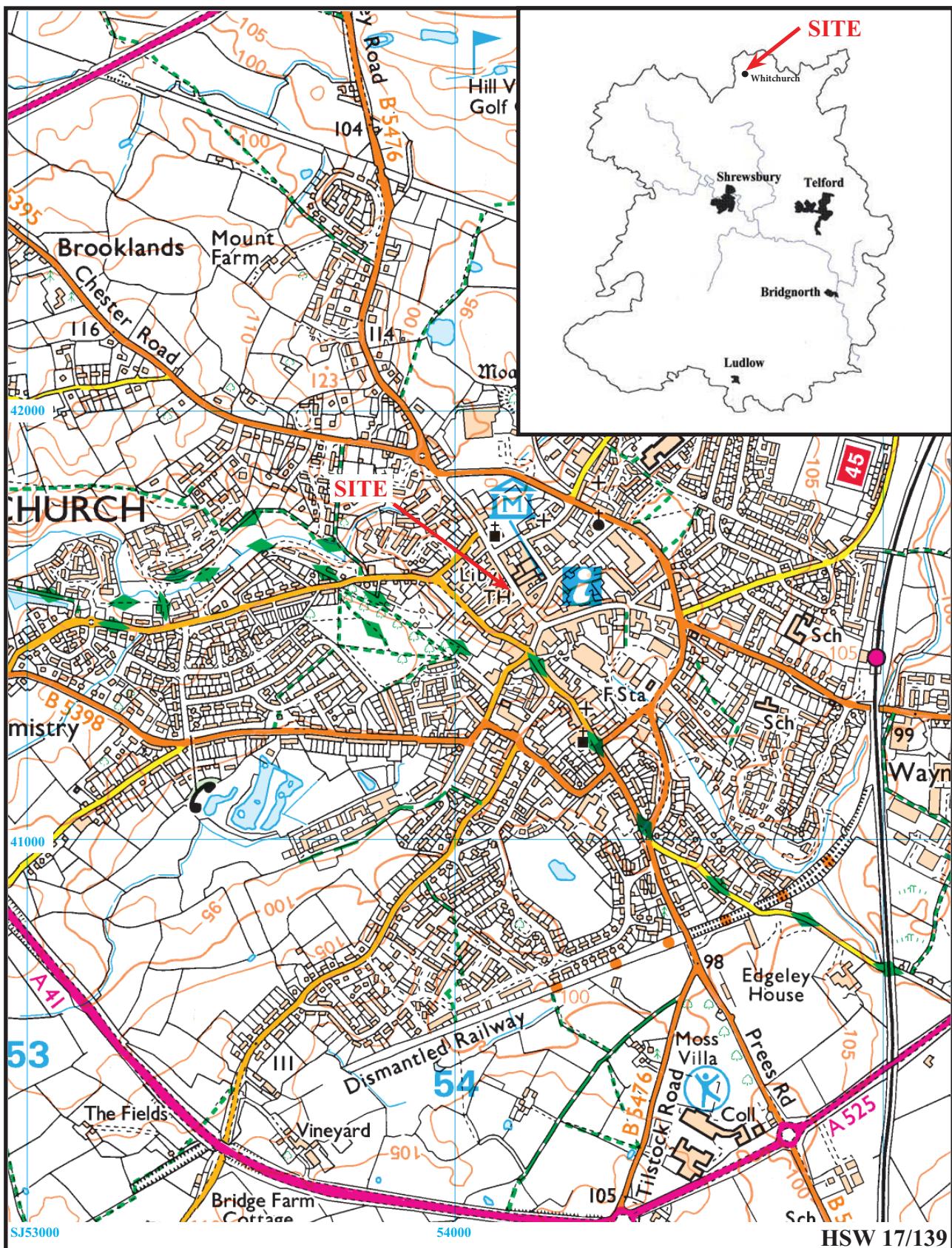
No finds of archaeological interest were recovered from the fieldwork.

Conclusion

The excavation of the area for proposed foundations was monitored for finds and features of archaeological interest. However, the shallow depth of the foundations did not reveal archaeologically relevant horizons and nothing of archaeological significance was noted in the exposed areas.

References

- BGS 2017, *British Geological Survey*, <http://www.bgs.ac.uk>
Buteux, V, 2005, Archaeological assessment of Whitchurch, Shropshire in Dalwood, H and Bryant, V, *The Central Marches Historic Towns Survey, 1992-6, Extensive Urban Survey*, English Heritage Worcestershire County Council. Worcester
Davey, G, 2017, 36 - 38 High Street, Whitchurch, Shropshire, building recording, TVAS North Midlands, report 17/139a, Stoke-on-Trent
NPPF 2012, *National Planning Policy Framework*, Dept Communities and Local Govt, London

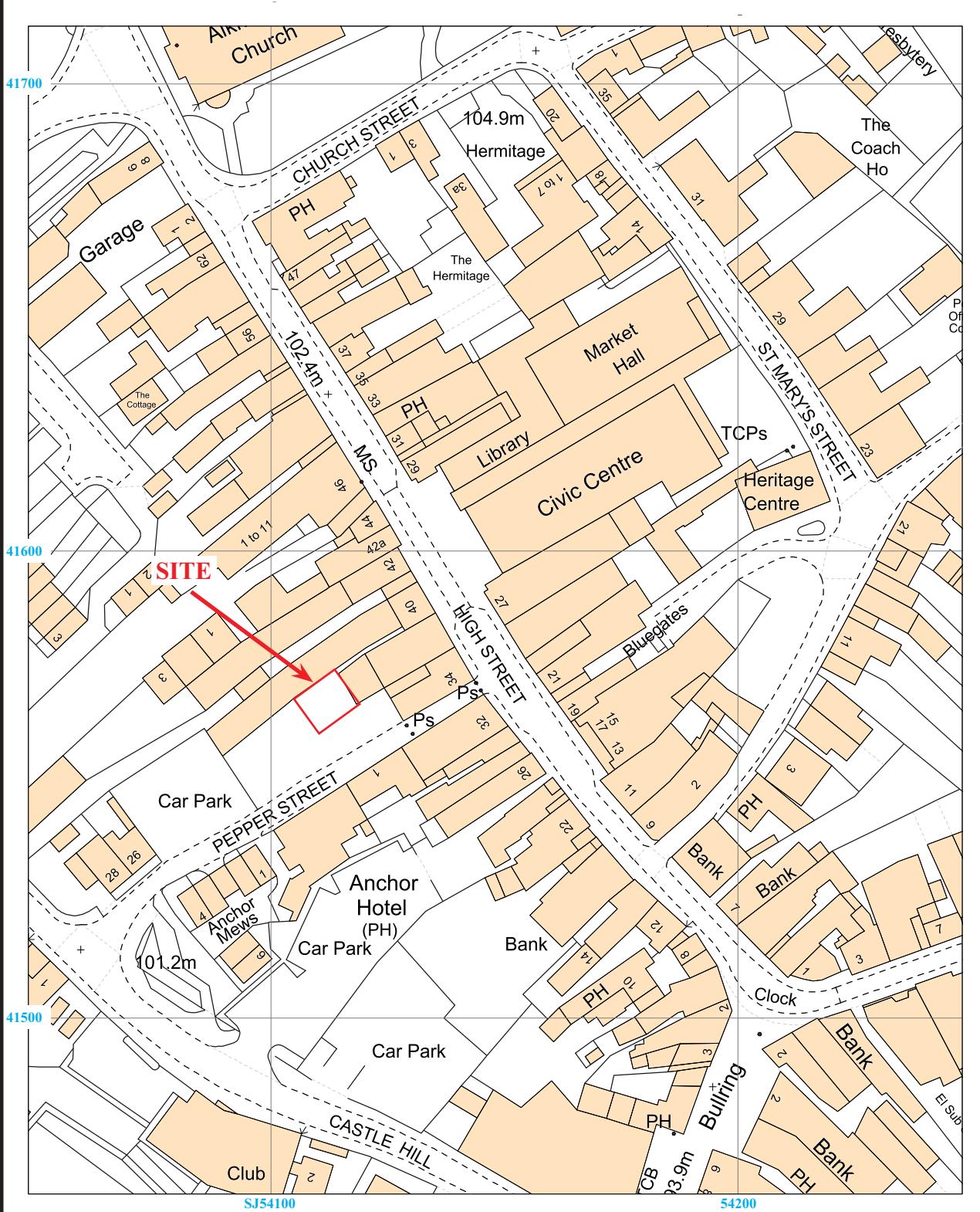


**36-38 High Street,
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Figure 1. Location of site within Whitchurch and Shropshire.

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Figure 2. Detailed location of site within Whitchurch.

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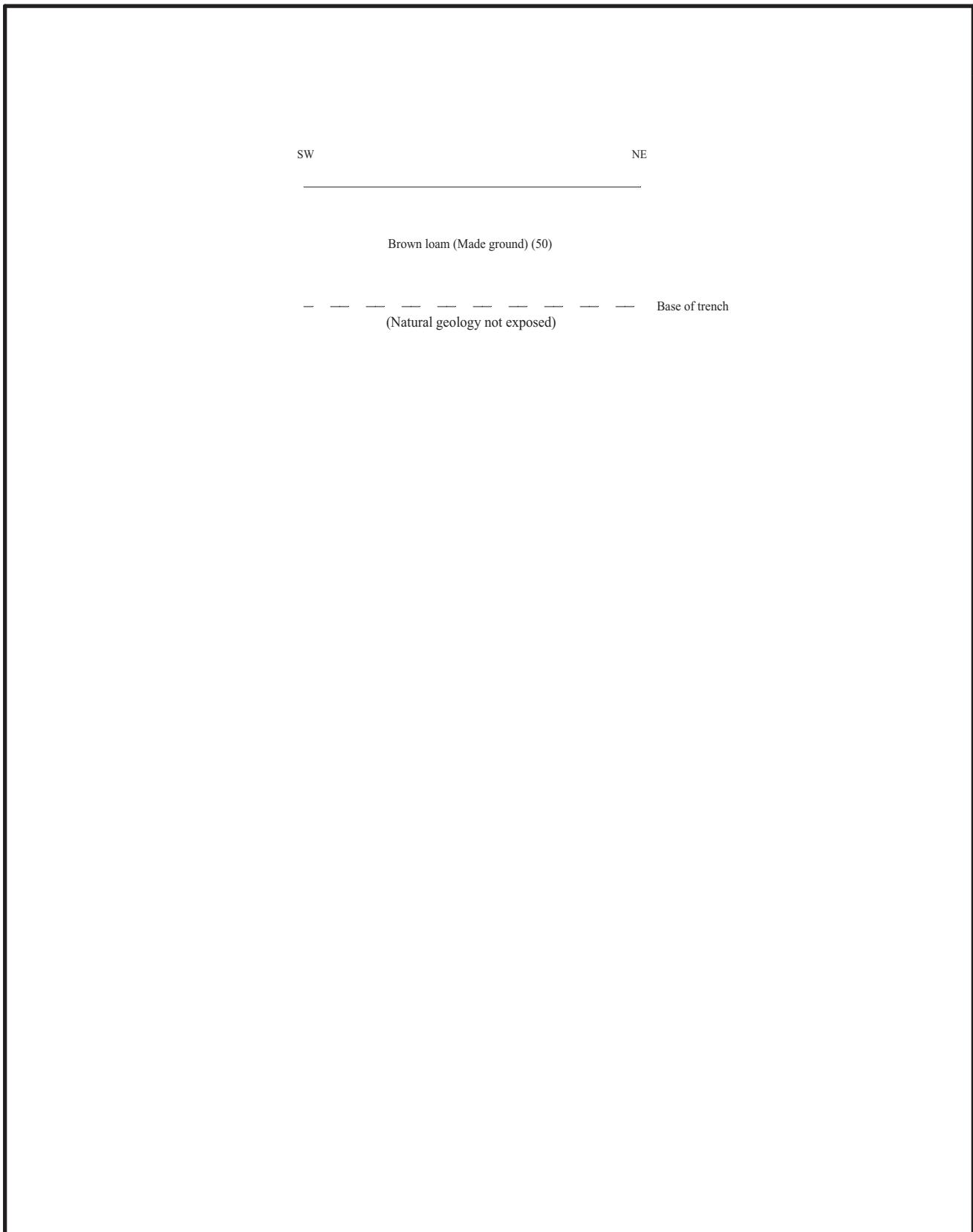




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Figure 3 .Detailed location of monitored area
of ground reduction





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Figure 4. Representative section.





Plate 1. Representative section, looking northwest, Scale: 2m.



Plate 2. Working shot, looking north, Scale: 2m.

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**36-38 High Street,
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Plates 1 and 2.

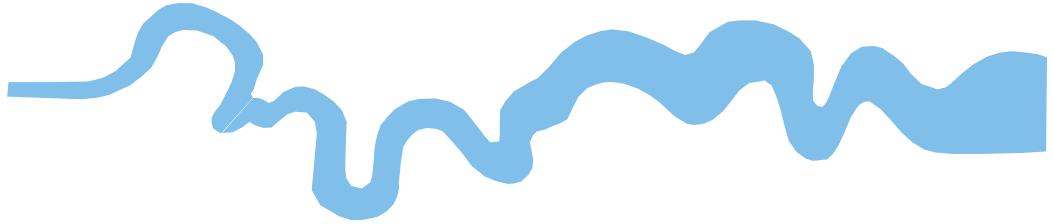


TIME CHART

Calendar Years

Modern	_____	AD 1901
Victorian	_____	AD 1837
Post Medieval	_____	AD 1500
Medieval	_____	AD 1066
Saxon	_____	AD 410
Roman	_____	AD 43 AD 0 BC
Iron Age	_____	750 BC
Bronze Age: Late	_____	1300 BC
Bronze Age: Middle	_____	1700 BC
Bronze Age: Early	_____	2100 BC
Neolithic: Late	3300 BC
Neolithic: Early	4300 BC
Mesolithic: Late	6000 BC
Mesolithic: Early	10000 BC
Palaeolithic: Upper	30000 BC
Palaeolithic: Middle	70000 BC
Palaeolithic: Lower	2,000,000 BC





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