

Archaeological Evaluation Programme

No 41 Oldbury Road Tewkesbury Gloucestershire

NGR SO 389465 232830

Report No. 2003 – 07 – 10

In *TEODECHESBERIE* fueŕ T.R.E. quat<sup>4</sup> xx<sup>u</sup>.7 xv. hidæ.

Ex his sunt in dñio .xlV.7 erant quiete ab omi fer  
uitio regali 7 geldo. pter feruitiu ipfius dñi cuj<sup>9</sup> erat C.

In capite C<sup>H</sup> erant in dñio .xII. car<sup>7</sup> .7 l. int<sup>7</sup> feruos

7 ancillas.7 xvi. bord circa aulā manebant.7 II. mo

lini de .xx. folid<sup>7</sup> .7 una piscaria.7 una salina ap Wichā

ptin<sup>7</sup> ad C.

Ap Sudwichā .III. hid. In Trotintune .vi. hidæ. In Fiten

tone .vi. hide. In Pamintonic .vIII. hidæ. In Natone .III. hidæ.7 dim<sup>7</sup>.

In Waltone .III. hidæ. In Estone .vi. hidæ.

Ibi eraŕ uiffi .xxI.7 IX. Radchenift. hntes .xxvi. car<sup>7</sup>.

7 v. colibti 7 un<sup>9</sup> bord cū .v. car. Hi Radchenift

arabaŕ 7 herciabant ad curiā dñi.

## CONTENTS

NON-TECHNICAL SUMMARY	3
1. INTRODUCTION	4
2. GEOLOGY	4
3. ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND	4
4. EVALUATION STRATEGY	6
5. EVALUATION PROGRAMME	6
6. SUMMARY	8
7. BIBLIOGRAPHY	8
8. COPYRIGHT	8
FIGURE 1 SITE LOCATION	9
FIGURE 2 TRENCH 1 (PLAN & SECTION)	10
FIGURE 3 TRENCH 2 (PLAN & SECTION)	11
FIGURE 4 TRENCH 3 (PLAN & SECTION)	12
PLATE 1 TRENCH 1 LOOKING NORTH SHOWING METAL PLATE	13
PLATE 2 TRENCH 2 LOOKING NORTH SHOWING 18 <sup>TH</sup> /19 <sup>TH</sup> CENTURY WALL	13
PLATE 3 TRENCH 3 LOOKING EAST SHOWING POSSIBLE MEDIEVAL DITCH	14
APPENDIX 1 CONTEXT REGISTER	15

*Cover: Extract from the 17<sup>th</sup> century translation of Domesday Book*

### NON-TECHNICAL SUMMARY

The evaluation revealed two significant features. A section of 18th century foundation discovered beneath the yard to the south of No 41 appears to have been part of a boundary wall. The more interesting feature, however, was revealed in the yard to the south-east of the property, near the access to East Street. This may be part of a boundary ditch associated with a medieval burgage plot system. Pottery found within the ditch fill suggests the ditch was in use until the early post-medieval period.

The trench excavated in the yard at the front of No 41 revealed no archaeologically significant features or deposits.

# Archaeological Evaluation Programme at No 41 Oldbury Road Tewkesbury Gloucestershire

## **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

- 1.1 Border Archaeology was commissioned by the Nucleus Housing Group to undertake an archaeological evaluation at No 41 Oldbury Road Tewkesbury to comply with a brief issued by Charles Parry of Gloucestershire County Council Archaeology Service in June 2003.
- 1.2 This archaeological evaluation forms part of the planning process and is set within the non-statutory guidelines of Planning Policy Guidance 16 issued by the Department of the Environment in November 1990. This national legislation sets out guidance from the Secretary of State regarding development-prompted archaeological issues in relation to Local Planning Authority (LPA) procedure.
- 1.3 The evaluation was completed during late June and early July 2003 and, as part of prudent health and safety considerations, the trenches were backfilled immediately after the completion of the works.
- 1.4 A standard Risk Assessment was completed prior to the start of work.
- 1.5 The site manager was Thomas Wellicome, who compiled the works report, which was edited by George Children MA, Technical Services Manager.

## **2.0 GEOLOGY**

- 2.1 As the site lies within an urban centre, the Soil Survey of England and Wales (1983) has not assigned a soil description. The surrounding soils are a 411b EVESHAM 2 and 813b FLADBURY 1. The EVESHAM 2 can be described as a slowly permeable, calcareous clayey soil that is seasonally waterlogged. The clayey soils contain fine loamy or fine silty particulates. The FLADBURY 1 soils lie either side of the River Swilgate and consist of stoneless clayey soils that are, in places, calcareous. These soils are affected by groundwater and land is at risk of flooding.

## **3.0 ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND**

- 3.1 Although the market town and borough of Tewkesbury has Anglo-Saxon origins, remains dating to the early or middle Neolithic period, some 5-6,000 years ago, have been recorded. In addition, a Bronze Age Beaker-type burial was discovered on the site of the Roses Theatre and a settlement site probably exists nearby. Significant remains were also found prior to construction of the Eastern Relief Road. A Neolithic, Bronze Age and Romano-British landscape was discovered, including a series of enclosures and lithic scatters. Associated with six Romano-British inhumations discovered during field-levelling at Holme Hill was a quantity of 3rd and 4th century pottery and part of a building. A further seven burials were found in 1967.



- 3.2 It is thought that by AD 715 a small Benedictine house had been founded on the present abbey site. According to Domesday Book, Tewkesbury was comparatively wealthy. Prior to 1066, there were 95 hides, 45 of which were owned by the lordship. The inventory also mentions 12 ploughs, 50 slaves, 16 smallholders, 2 mills, a fishery and a salt-house located at Droitwich. Lands attributed to Tewkesbury are also registered under other place-names.
- 3.3 During the medieval and early post-medieval periods, Tewkesbury was an important agricultural market centre and river port. Between the 11th and 13th centuries the surrounding area was noted for its vineyards (Steane 1985:174). In 1205, the longest early medieval bridge across the River Severn, which flows west of the town, was constructed. The river itself was a vital means of communication. In 1211, cargoes of grain and hay were sent by river to Bristol. This trade continued throughout the medieval period. By 1584, nine boats of between 10 and 20 tons were recorded in the Tewkesbury port books. Cargoes included grain, malt and hides.
- 3.4 The town probably grew around the Benedictine Abbey of St Mary during the late Saxon or early medieval period. Between 1066 and 1086, a market was established at The Cross in Church Street. In 1102, St. Mary's Abbey, the building seen today, was founded by Robert Fitzhamon. At the same time, the town began to gain political and royal influence.
- 3.5 The abbey complex would have enhanced the economic status of Tewkesbury during this period. However, on January 9th 1540, the abbey was dissolved under the Monasteries Act (instigated by Henry VIII) and two years later the abbey church was purchased from the Crown for £453. Most of the remaining buildings were demolished.
- 3.6 Most high-status buildings before the 18th century were constructed either of [blue lias] stone or oolitic limestone from Bredon Hill or the nearby Cotswold Hills. During the Medieval period, less significant buildings, such as cottages and farm buildings, were of timber (commonly oak) construction with wattle-and-daub infill. A few such buildings are found in Church Street. By the 16th century, more lower-status buildings were being constructed. By the 18th century, many frontages within the medieval core of the town were rebuilt in brick. Most of the present main street frontage dates from this period. The medieval fabric is thus preserved within the central and rear sections of many buildings.
- 3.7 The number of trades represented within the town proliferated during the Post-Medieval period. A new market hall was erected in 1789 at The Cross, which replaced an earlier hall demolished in the same year. A Town Hall was also constructed on the west side of High Street. An Act of Parliament enabling the paving of the streets, passed in 1786, reflected the town's prosperity at that time. In addition, spa water was discovered at Newtown in 1746. A spa was built but never became popular.
- 3.8 The buildings in the town centre, in particular those in Church Street and Mill Street, retain much of their medieval character, partly as a result of economic recession. During the mid-to-late 19th century, the Birmingham & Gloucester Railway bypassed Tewkesbury to the east, via Northway. Following a period of population growth, this



had a significant adverse effect on the importance and prosperity of the town. Very little re-development occurred during this period and, as a result, many medieval timber-framed buildings were saved.

#### **4.0 EVALUATION STRATEGY**

- 4.1 Three trial trenches were located within the premises. Trench 1 was located within the front yard directly in front of No. 41. Trench 2 was located in a yard to the south of the property. Trench 3 was located in a yard at the south-east of the property near the access to East Street. All trial trenches were tied into the Ordnance Survey National Grid. Recording in plan and section was at a scale of 1:20 (including all archaeological deposits, features and structures). All features and structures were photographed using monochrome and colour transparency film.
- 4.2 The evaluation included a detailed stratigraphic record using a context numbering system (Trench 1 (101)–(105), Trench 2 (201)–(204) and Trench 3 (301)–(307)). All trial trenches were excavated by hand to the first significant archaeological horizon or natural deposits (whichever was encountered first).
- 4.3 Artefacts recovered were limited to post-medieval pottery, animal bone and iron (Fe). The pottery assemblage consisted mainly of 19th and 20th century transfer wares. Artifacts of a later date or considered not important were recorded but not retained. All other artifacts were cleaned, labelled and recorded and will be incorporated into the site archive. Any artifacts recovered from the spoil were recorded as unstratified.
- 4.4 Full written and drawn records of excavated contexts were made in accordance with archaeological practices set out by the IFA and using the MoLas single-context planning system (where applicable).
- 4.5 Surveying values for all trial trenches were taken from a benchmark of 14.57m OD located on the junction of Nelson Street and East Street.

#### **5.0 EVALUATION PROGRAMME**

- 5.1 Three 1.5m x 1.5m trial trenches were located within the area of the proposed development. The depth of the trenches was influenced by a variety of factors. Trench 1 reached a depth of up to 1.10m, Trench 2 a depth of 0.75m and Trench 3 a depth of 0.95m.
- 5.2 **Trench 1**
- 5.3 This was located in the yard at the front of No 41 Oldbury Road and contained five contexts. The first of these was the modern concrete surface (101), underlying which was a tightly compacted, yellowish-brown gravel sub-base (102). Context (102) overlay a loosely compacted, dark brown silty sandy garden soil with occasional post-medieval pottery (blue transfer ware), occasional clay pipe fragments and frequent river-washed stone (103). On the interface of contexts (102) and (103) was a large



immovable metal object/plate of unknown provenance. This had an area greater than 0.80m x 0.50m x 0.10m and appeared to be post-medieval/ 19th century in date. The area beneath the object remained excavated.

- 5.4 Context (103) abutted a wall constructed of five courses of standard gauge brick with cement bonding (105). This feature, measuring 0.20m wide and 0.50m high, was only present in section and was undisturbed by the trench. The length of the wall could not be determined. This feature was post-medieval in date and probably related to service (particularly drainage) activity. Underlying (103) was a loosely compacted, yellowish-brown sandy gravelly clay deposit containing frequent river-washed pebbles (104). This context was interpreted as natural riverine geology. *No significant archaeology was recorded within this trench.*

### 5.5 Trench 2

- 5.6 Trench 2 was located in a yard to the south of the workshop adjacent to No.41. Four contexts were recorded, the first of which was a modern concrete yard surface (201). Underlying (201) was a loosely compacted layer of post-medieval/modern brick, tile and corrugated iron (202). Context (202) overlay a moderately compacted, dark brown silty sandy loam (203) containing occasional post-medieval pottery sherds, post-medieval CBM, clay pipe and animal bone. Underlying and abutted by context (203) was a tightly compacted brick and gravel layer consisting of post-medieval CBM and cement (204). This feature, apparently 18th century in date, was oriented roughly north – south and seemed to form the foundation for a small boundary wall.

### 5.7 Trench 3

- 5.8 Trench 3 was located in a yard to the south-east of No.41, directly behind the workshop. Seven contexts were recorded. Underlying the modern tarmac yard surface (301) was a tightly compacted, yellowy-brown gravel sub-base (302). Context (302) overlay a tightly compacted, orangey-red (brick) and grey (gravel) rubble layer of post-medieval brick and gravel (303). The heavy compaction of this surface suggested that it may have been used as a yard surface. Underlying (303) was a loosely compacted, dark brown silty sandy garden soil with occasional post-medieval pottery (304). Context (304) overlay a loosely compacted, yellowish, orangey-brown sandy soil with occasional flint and river-washed pebbles (305). This context had been affected by worm action but appeared to be natural riverine deposition.
- 5.9 Cutting into (305) was a rectilinear ditch/gully cut [306] running east – west across the trench. The break of slope at the top of the cut was gradual, the sides were gently sloping and the break of slope at the base was gradual. The base was flat. The dimensions of the ditch were 1.70m x <0.80m x 0.25m. Context [306] was filled with a medium brown, silty sandy soil containing frequent river-washed pebbles and occasional early post-medieval pottery (307). The orientation and position suggest a medieval origin for the ditch/gully and the possibility that it originally delineated a burgage plot. The pottery found within the fill suggests that the ditch fell out of use at the beginning of the post-medieval period. The single-context fill suggests rapid infilling rather than the gradual accumulation of deposits.

## 6.0 SUMMARY

- 6.1 The evaluation revealed two significant features. A section of 18th century wall foundation running roughly north – south within Trench 2 appears to have been part of a boundary wall. The more interesting feature, however, was revealed in Trench 3. This was interpreted as a section of a boundary ditch/gully possibly forming part of a medieval burgage plot system. The ditch ran east – west and was up to 0.80m wide. Pottery within the fill indicates that the ditch was in use until the early post-medieval period. Trench 1 at the front of the property revealed no archaeologically significant features or deposits.

## 7.0 BIBLIOGRAPHY

Descriptive & Historical Notes on "Old Tewkesbury" of the past and present. Printed and published by W. North, 139 High St. Tewkesbury.

Hannan, A. 1999 'Tewkesbury and the Earls of Gloucester: Excavations at Holm Hill, 1974-5', *Bristol & Gloucestershire Archaeological Society Transactions*, pp. 79-231.

Hindle, B.P. 1990 *Medieval Town Plans*, Shire Archaeology.

Jones, A. 1987 *Tewkesbury*, London, Philimore.

Ross, K. 1986 *The Book of Tewkesbury*, p15-16.

Soil Survey of England and Wales, 1983, Silsoe.

Steane, J.M., 1985 *The Archaeology of Medieval England and Wales*, London. Croom Helm.

Thorn, F. & Thorn, C. 1986 *Domesday Book: Gloucestershire*, Chichester.

Victoria County History Series 1907, **Vol II**

Victoria County History Series 1968, **Vol VIII**

## 8.0 COPYRIGHT

- 8.1 Border Archaeology shall retain full copyright of any commissioned reports, tender documents or other project documents, under the Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988 with all rights reserved; excepting that it hereby provides an exclusive licence to the client for the use of the report by the client in all matters directly relating to the project as described in the Project Specification.



**FIGURE 1 SITE LOCATION**

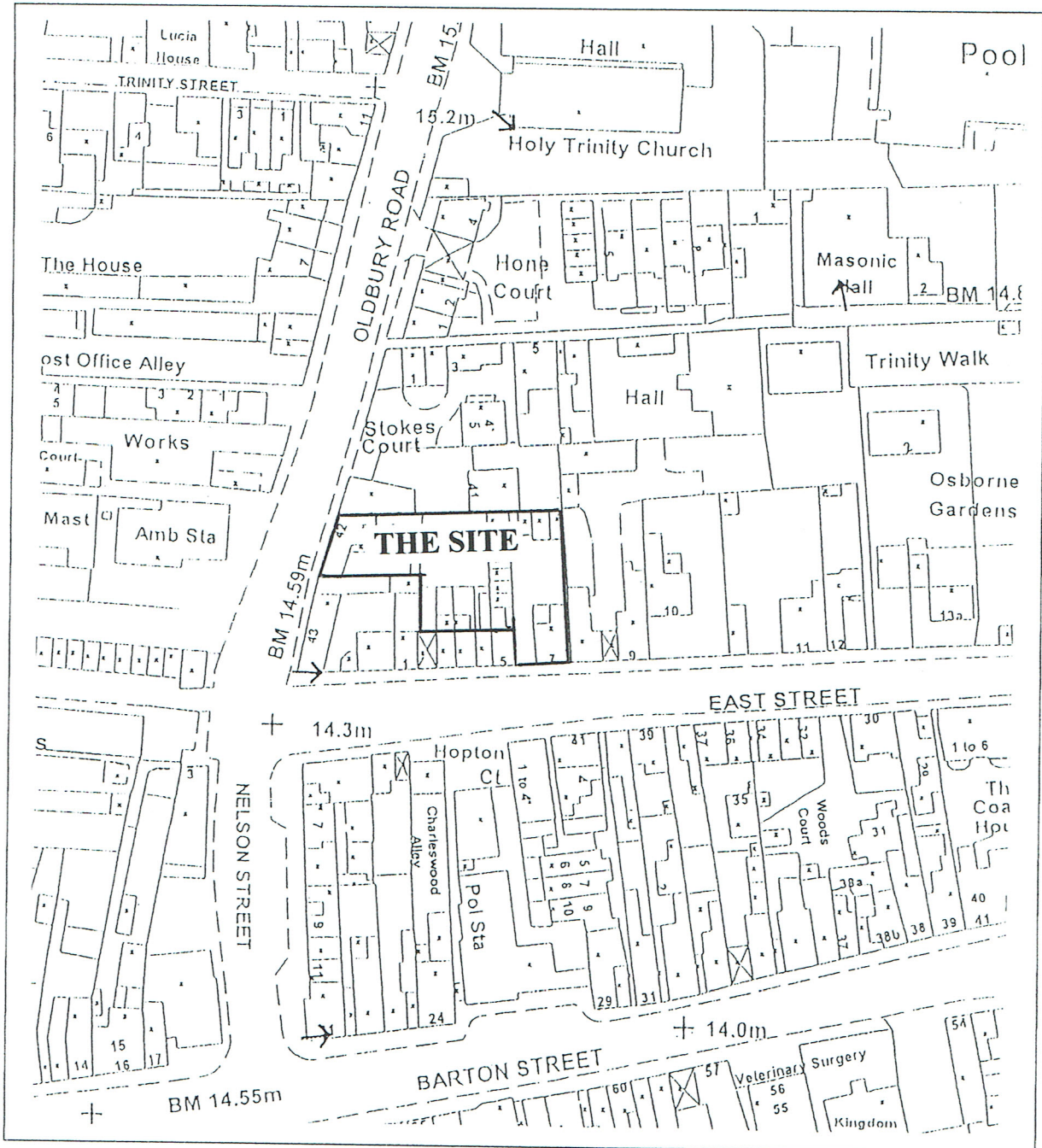


FIGURE 2 TRENCH 1 (PLAN & SECTION)

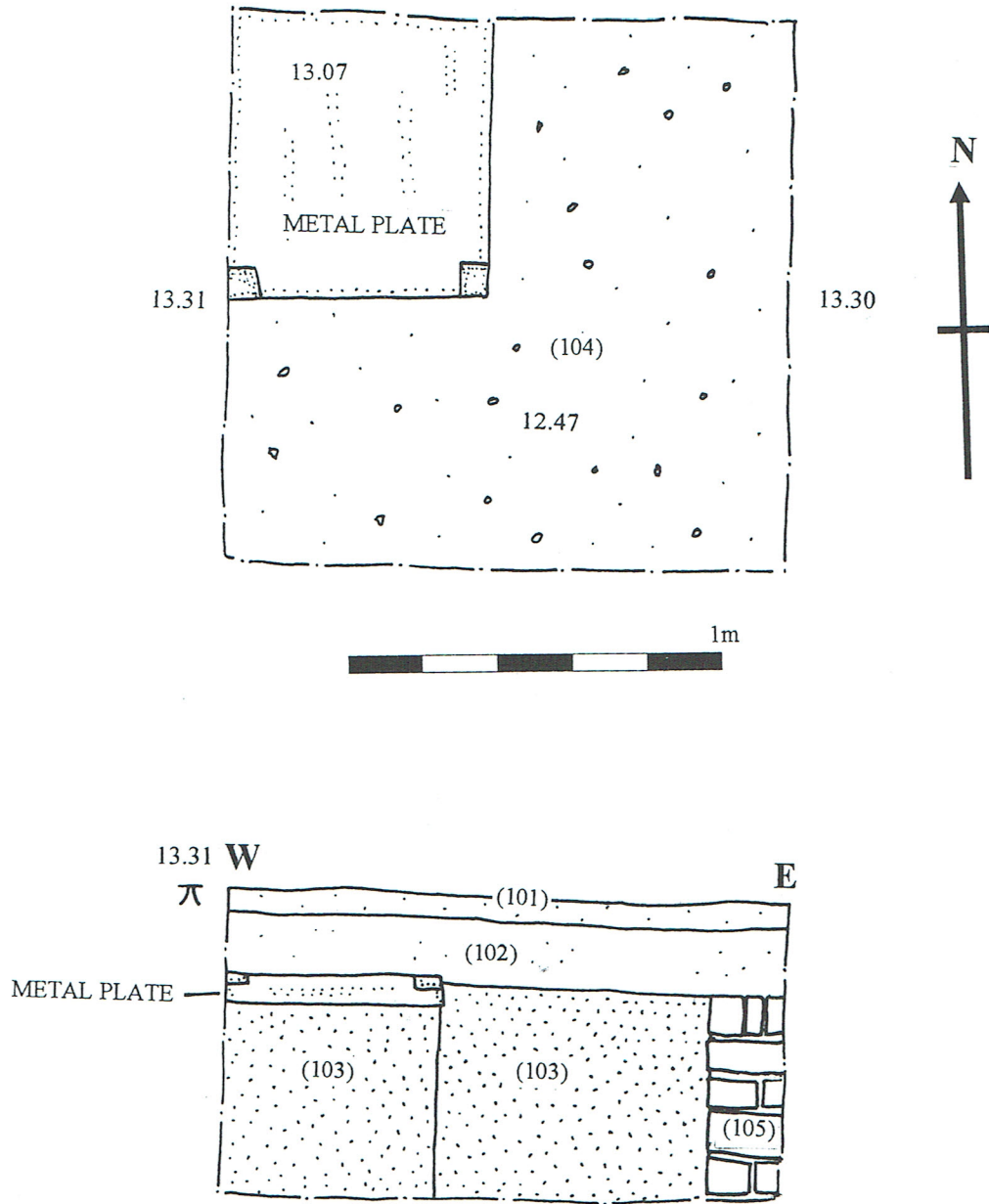


FIGURE 3 TRENCH 2 (PLAN & SECTION)

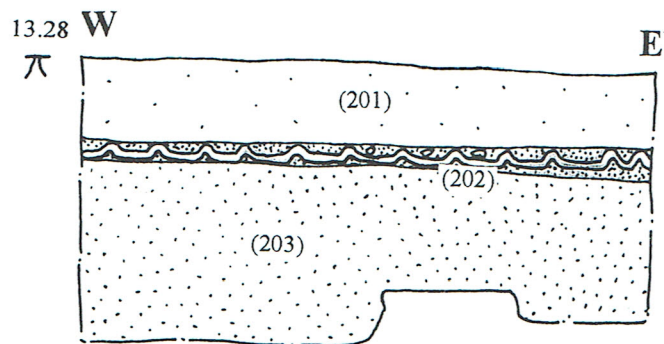
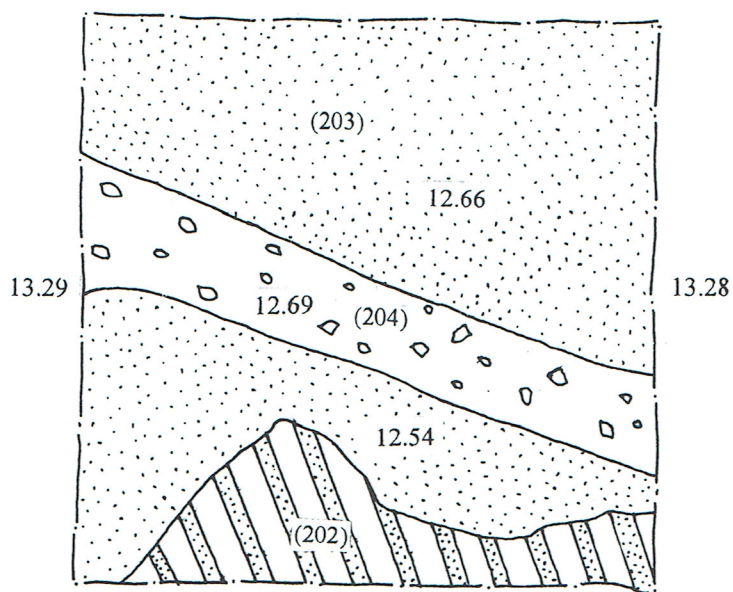


FIGURE 4 TRENCH 3 (PLAN & SECTION)

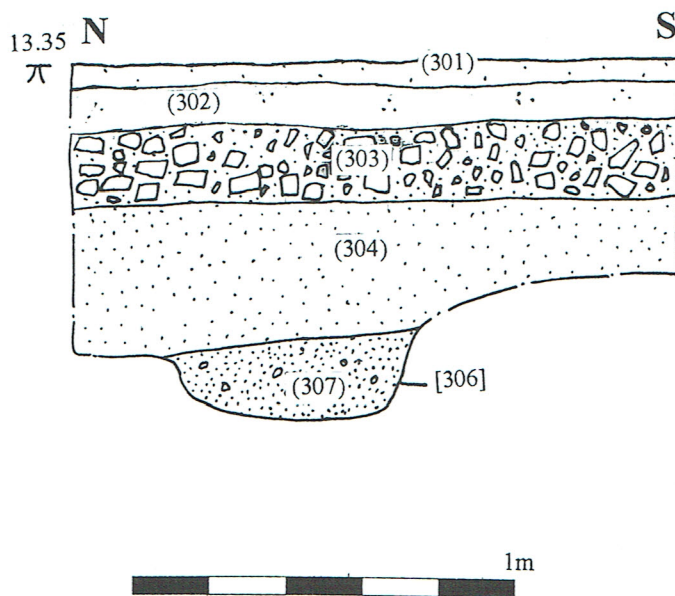
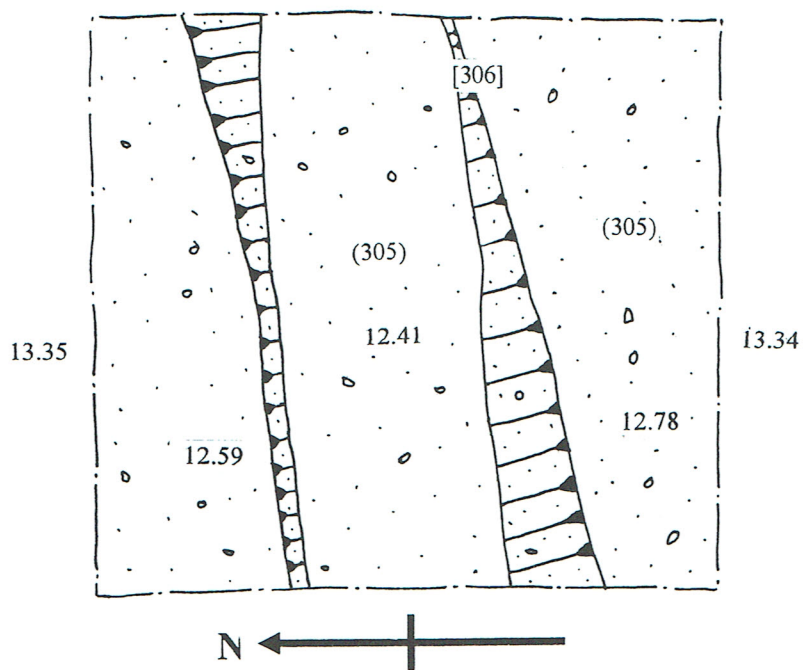




PLATE 1 TRENCH 1 LOOKING NORTH SHOWING METAL PLATE



PLATE 2 TRENCH 2 LOOKING NORTH SHOWING 18<sup>TH</sup>/19<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY WALL

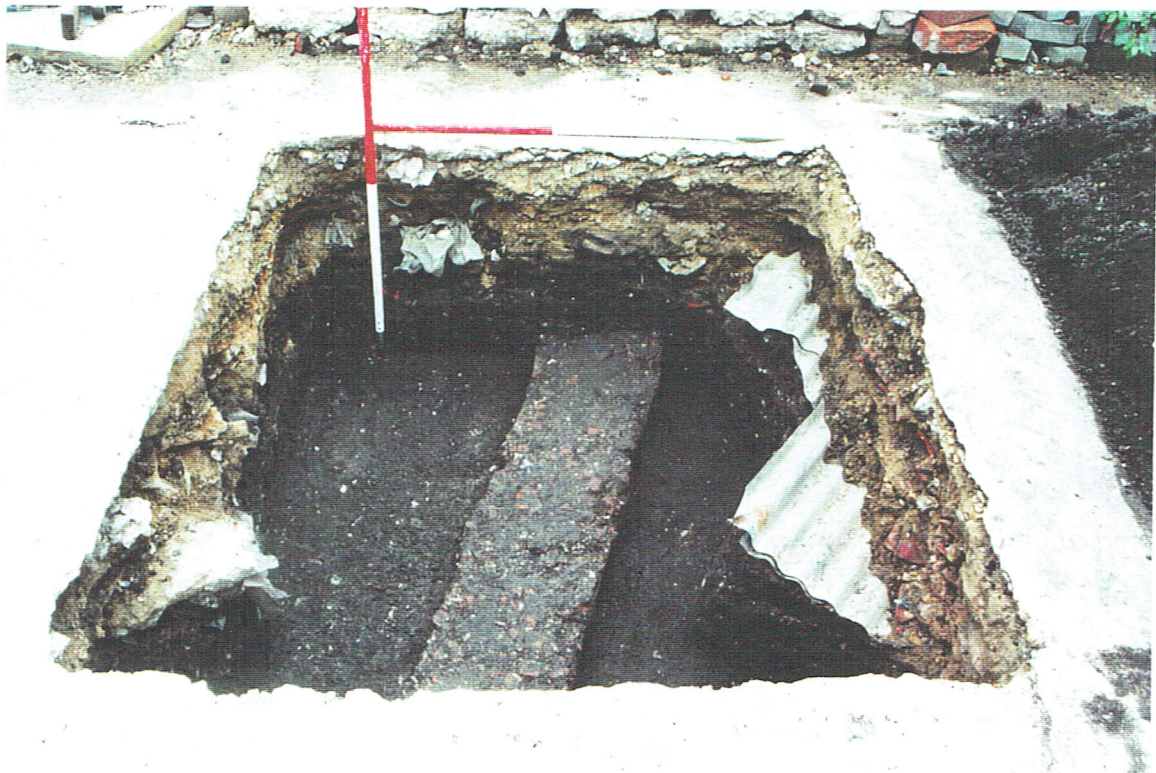




PLATE 3 TRENCH 3 LOOKING EAST SHOWING POSSIBLE MEDIEVAL DITCH



## APPENDIX 1      CONTEXT REGISTER (TRIAL TRENCHES 1 - 3)

### TRENCH 1

CONTEXT (101)	Concrete surface layer. Dimensions: 1.50m x 1.50m x 0.08m.
INTERPRETATION:	Modern yard surface.
CONTEXT (102)	Tightly compacted yellowish brown gravel sub-base. On interface between (102) and (103) was a large metal object of unknown provenance. Object measured an area greater than 0.80m x 0.50m x 0.10m and appeared to be post-medieval/ 19th century in date. Dimensions: 1.50m x 1.50m x 0.20m.
INTERPRETATION:	Sub-base for (101).
CONTEXT (103)	Loosely compacted dark brown silty sandy garden soil with occasional post-medieval pottery (blue transfer ware), occasional clay pipe and frequent river washed stones. Dimensions: 1.50m x 1.50m x 0.70m.
INTERPRETATION:	Post-medieval garden soil.
CONTEXT (104)	Loosely compacted yellowish brown sandy gravelly clay with frequent river washed pebbles. Heavy worm action. Dimensions: 1.50m x 1.50m. Depth unknown as not Excavated.
INTERPRETATION:	Natural riverine deposits.
CONTEXT (105)	Five-course brick wall constructed from standard gauge brick with cement bonding. Only present in section and undisturbed by trench. Dimensions: 0.20m x 0.50m. Length not determined.
INTERPRETATION:	Post- medieval brick structure probably related to services for no. 41.

### TRENCH 2

CONTEXT (201)	Concrete surface. Dimensions: 1.50m x 1.50m x 0.30m.
INTERPRETATION:	Modern concrete yard surface.
CONTEXT (202)	Loosely compacted layer of modern/post-medieval brick, tile and corrugated iron. Dimensions: 1.50 x 1.50 x 0.05m.
INTERPRETATION:	Post- medieval building rubbish/debris layer.
CONTEXT (203)	Moderately compacted dark brown silty sandy loam. Occasional post-medieval pottery, CBM, clay pipe and animal bone. Dimensions: 1.50m x 1.50m x 0.35m.
INTERPRETATION:	Post-medieval garden soil.
CONTEXT (204)	Tightly compacted brick and gravel layer consisting of post-medieval CBM and cement. Orientation: N-S. Dimensions: 1.60m x 0.35m x 0.30m.
INTERPRETATION:	Post medieval, 18th century wall foundation.



### TRENCH 3

CONTEXT (301)	Tarmacadam surface. Dimensions: 1.60m x 1.60m x 0.08m.
INTERPRETATION:	Modern tarmacadam yard surface.
CONTEXT (302)	Tightly compacted yellowy brown gravel sub-base. Dimensions: 1.60m x 1.60m x 0.08m.
INTERPRETATION:	Sub-base for (301).
CONTEXT (303)	Tightly compacted orangey red (brick) and grey (gravel) layer of post-medieval bricks and gravel. Dimensions: 1.60m x 1.60m x 0.15m.
INTERPRETATION:	Post medieval brick rubble deposit.
CONTEXT (304)	Loosely compacted dark brown silty sandy soil, with occasional post-medieval pottery. Dimensions: 1.60m x 1.60m x 0.30m.
INTERPRETATION:	Post-medieval garden soil.
CONTEXT (305)	Loosely compacted yellowish orangey brown sandy soil with occasional flint and river washed pebbles. Heavy worm action. Dimensions: 1.60m x 1.60m x >0.30m.
INTERPRETATION:	Natural soils.
CONTEXT [306]	Rectilinear cut running east-west across trench. Break of slope (top) gradual, sides sloping and break of slope (base) gradual. Base of cut flat. Filled by (307). Dimensions: 1.70m x <0.80m x 0.25m.
INTERPRETATION:	Cut of ditch possibly delineating medieval burgage plot.
CONTEXT (307)	Medium brown, silty sandy soil with frequent river washed pebbles and occasional early post-medieval pottery. Dimensions: 1.70m x <0.80m x 0.25m.
INTERPRETATION:	Early post-medieval fill of possible medieval ditch [306]