

# Archaeological Observation

**St Thomas' Depot  
St Thomas' Road  
Upper Tean  
Staffordshire**

NGR: SK 01020 39640

## **BORDER ARCHAEOLOGY**

PO Box 36  
Leominster  
Herefordshire  
HR6 0YQ  
Tel: 01568 760453

**Technical Services**

Chapel Walk  
Burgess Street  
Leominster  
Herefordshire  
HR6 8DE  
Tel: 01568 610101  
Tel/fax: 01568 616900  
E-mail: [borderarch@btconnect.com](mailto:borderarch@btconnect.com)

# Contents

---

<b>1.</b>	<b>NON TECHNICAL SUMMARY</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>2.</b>	<b>INTRODUCTION</b>	<b>4</b>
	<b>2.1 Soils &amp; Geology</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>3.</b>	<b>BRIEF HISTORICAL &amp; ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>4.</b>	<b>METHODOLOGY</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>5.</b>	<b>ARCHAEOLOGICAL OBSERVATION</b>	<b>6</b>
	<b>5.1 Observation of Building Plot 1</b>	<b>6</b>
	<b>5.2 Observation of Building Plot 2</b>	<b>8</b>
	<b>5.3 Observation of Building Plot 3</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>6.</b>	<b>CONCLUSION</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>7.</b>	<b>COPYRIGHT</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>8.</b>	<b>BIBLIOGRAPHY</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>9.</b>	<b>APPENDIX 1: CONTEXT REGISTER</b>	<b>11</b>

**Report specification:**

*Archaeological observation:* Thomas Wellicome BA

*Draft report:* Thomas Wellicome BA & Stephen Priestley MA

*Report editing:* George Children MA

*Approved:* Neil Shurety

## 1. Non Technical Summary

---

*The archaeological observation undertaken by Border Archaeology at the extreme southern end of the residential development site at St Thomas' Street, Upper Tean, Staffordshire revealed evidence of post-medieval archaeological features consisting of a brick-lined well and the foundation of a building orientated roughly north-south and a small quantity of associated late post-medieval pottery. Both of these features are probably of late 18<sup>th</sup>/19<sup>th</sup> century date and associated with workers' housing provided for the employees of the Phillips tape weaving factory located to the south of the site.*

*During the topsoil strip carried out in the central western area of the site, a fragment of a gravestone of probable mid-late 19<sup>th</sup> century date was located lying on the surface. It is likely that this came from the disused burial ground of the former Providence Chapel (built 1822) located immediately to the west of the site. No other features, finds or deposits of archaeological significance were identified during this programme of archaeological observation.*

## 2. Introduction

This report details the archaeological observation programme (commonly known as a watching brief) undertaken by Border Archaeology under instruction from CPM Consultants for Walton Homes Ltd on the construction of a residential development on the site of the former St Thomas' Road Bus Depot, St Thomas' Road, Upper Tean, Staffordshire (centred on NGR SK 0102 3964) (**Fig. 1**).

A previous archaeological study of the site had indicated that there was likely to be poor preservation of archaeological deposits at the N end of the site; however, it was resolved that there remained sufficient potential for late medieval and early post-medieval deposits to survive in the southern part of the development site. Consequently, it was advised that a watching brief be maintained in the southern portion of the development site. The watching brief commenced on September 5<sup>th</sup> 2005 and was completed on February 21<sup>st</sup> 2006, with groundworks being carried out intermittently during this period.

This report was completed in February 2006. Copies will be submitted to Walton Homes Ltd, the Staffordshire County Archaeological Officer, the Staffordshire Historic Environment Record and the National Monuments Record.

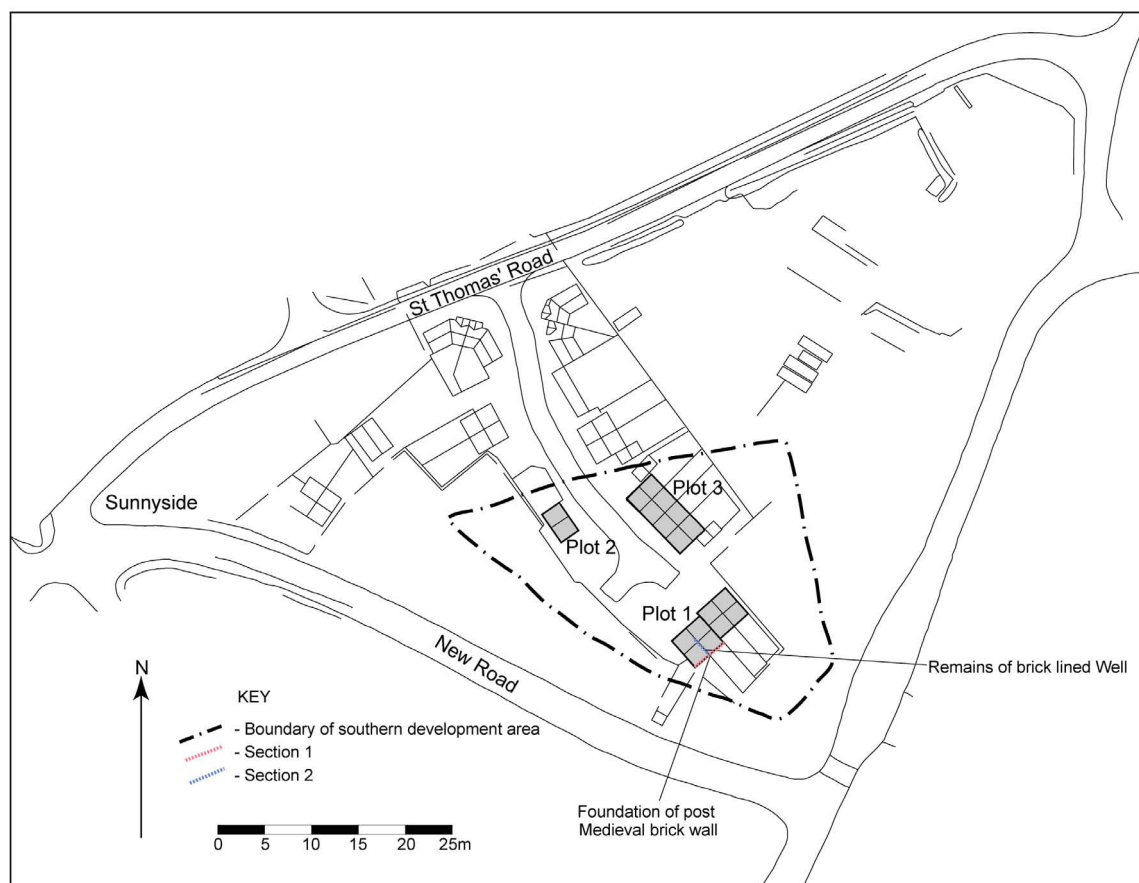


Fig. 1: Site Location Plan (NGR SK 0102 3964)

## 2.1 Soils & Geology

Four different soil types have been identified within the locality of the site, namely: 541b BROMSGROVE (541b), WIGTON MOOR (831c), BRIDGNORTH (551a) and WHIMPLE 3 (572f).

In the immediate vicinity of the site at Upper Tean, are typical brown earths of the BROMSGROVE (541b) series, consisting of well-drained reddish coarse loamy soils mainly over soft sandstone but deep in places with associated fine loamy soils with slowly permeable subsoils and slight seasonal waterlogging; the underlying geology is Permo-Triassic and Carboniferous sandstone and siltstone.

To the W of the site lies an area of typical cambic gley soils of the WIGTON MOOR (831c) series, consisting of permeable fine and coarse loam soils variably affected by groundwater, the drier soils being on slightly raised sites, overlying river terrace and glaciofluvial drift.

To the N and NW of the site lie typical brown earths of the BRIDGNORTH (551a) series, consisting of well-drained loamy soils overlying Permo-Triassic and Carboniferous reddish sandstone.

To the E of the site, the predominant soils are stagnogleyic argillic brown earths of the WHIMPLE 3 (572f) series consisting of reddish fine loamy or fine silty over clayey soils with slowly permeable subsoils and slight seasonal waterlogging and some slowly permeable seasonally waterlogged fine loamy and fine silty over clayey soils on lower slopes; the underlying geology is drift over Permo-Triassic and Carboniferous reddish mudstone.

## 3. Brief Historical & Archaeological Background

---

The site at St Thomas' Road lies just to the N of the centre of the historic settlement of Upper Tean in the parish of Checkley, Staffordshire, which is first recorded as *Tene* in the Domesday survey of 1086. Evidence of prehistoric funerary activity has been identified in the wider locality of the site, including two urn cremations of possible Bronze Age date, discovered when the New Tean Hall Mill tape weaving factory was constructed in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century and a possible barrow at Went Low, located some 400m N of the site. The course of the Roman road from Littlechester to Chesterton is believed to run along the High Street immediately to the S of the site although no archaeological evidence of Roman occupation, in terms of artefacts or features, has been found in the vicinity of Upper Tean to date.

The topography of the existing settlement at Upper Tean dates from the medieval and post-medieval periods. The focus of early settlement appears to have been located to the S of the site at Tean Hall, the probable site of the medieval manor house of Upper Tean, now occupied by a large timber-framed residence, mostly of late 16<sup>th</sup>-early 17<sup>th</sup> century date with early 18<sup>th</sup> century additions. In 1773, the Phillips family erected a tape weaving factory and warehouse immediately adjacent to their residence at Tean Hall, which was subsequently rebuilt and enlarged in 1822 to house steam-powered looms. Both Tean Hall and the adjacent tape weaving factory are Grade II\* Listed Buildings.

The establishment of Upper Tean as an important local centre for the weaving industry led to a significant growth in population during the late 18<sup>th</sup>/early 19<sup>th</sup> century and several Nonconformist chapels were built in the village, including the Providence (Independent) Chapel erected to the W of the site in New Road in 1822. The W boundary of the site lies immediately adjacent to the burial ground of the Providence Chapel which has been disused since the early 1990s when the chapel was closed and converted into flats. The tape weaving factory employed up to 600 people in 1851 and much of the existing 19<sup>th</sup> century housing to the S of the site was constructed as workers' accommodation (White, 1851).

The OS 1<sup>st</sup> edition 6-inch map of 1891 shows the site as largely open ground, bordered to the N by St Thomas' Street, to the S by the High Street and to the W by a tree-lined boundary marking the eastern limit of the Providence Chapel burial ground. Of particular interest is a cluster of buildings shown fronting onto the High Street in the extreme SW corner of the site (including the village Post Office and adjoining workers' cottages) with what appear to be sheds and outhouses to the rear.

## 4. Methodology

---

The aim of the programme of archaeological observation was to locate and record any archaeological remains revealed during the course of the groundworks and to confirm that no impact on the archaeological resource occurred without recording.

All stripping through layers of archaeological potential was undertaken under strict archaeological control using a machine fitted with a toothless ditching bucket and the subsoil was inspected for any archaeological features.

Full written and drawn records of all excavated contexts were made in accordance with archaeological practices set out by the Institute of Field Archaeologists (1994; revised 2001). Any identified archaeological deposits, features and structures were recorded in plan at a scale of 1:20 or 1:50 and in section or elevation at a scale of 1:20 or 1:50. Any significant features or structures were recorded at 1:10 in plan and section.

All features and structures within the trenches were photographed using digital and 35mm formats. A detailed stratigraphic record was made using a context numbering system. A temporary benchmark was established on the site (value 133.53m OD).

## 5. Archaeological Observation

---

### 5.1 Observation of Building Plot 1

This plot was located in the extreme SE corner of the site and the majority of the foundation trenching revealed a uniform stratigraphy. The uppermost deposit (001) covered most of the northern half of the foundations and consisted of dark brown silty sand with frequent demolition material, including brick and concrete, which appeared to derive from recent demolition works on the site. This deposit overlay a loosely compacted dark brown sandy loam topsoil containing occasional post-medieval pottery and CBM (002). Beneath the topsoil was a moderately compacted reddish-brown clayey sand (003).

Two post-medieval features were found which underlay (002) and cut into (003). The first of these comprised the rubble remains of a brick foundation wall (005) located within a foundation cut [004] orientated roughly N-S on the same alignment as the present foundation trenching (**Fig. 2**). The wall was in a poor condition and appeared to have been extensively robbed.

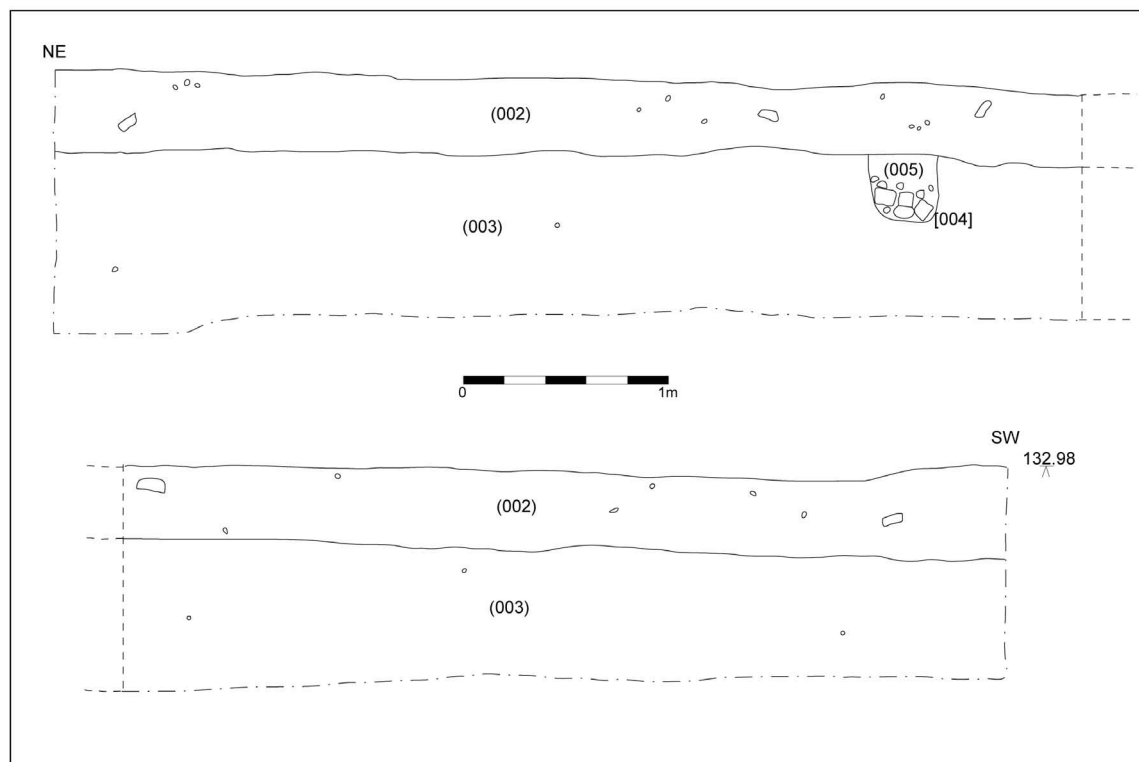


Fig. 2: NW-facing section drawing showing post-medieval brick foundation wall (005) located in building plot 1

The second feature located was a brick-lined post-medieval well (008) within a near-vertical circular cut [006], which had been backfilled with a loosely compacted dark brown silty sand containing frequent post-medieval CBM and occasional river-washed pebbles (007) (**Plate 1; Fig. 3**). The well was constructed of unfrogged brick and no evidence of bonding was visible. Filling the cut of the well and abutting the well itself was a loosely to moderately compacted greyish-brown clayey sand (009). The well extended beneath the base of the trench and was thus not fully excavated.

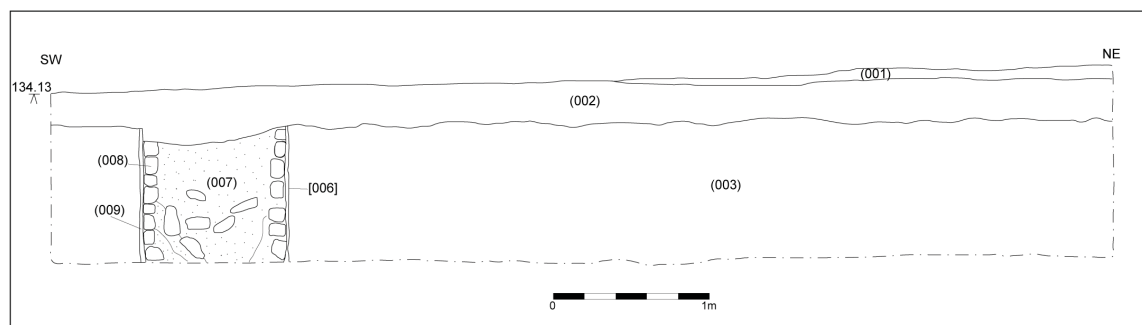


Fig. 3: SE-facing section drawing showing post-medieval brick-lined well (008) found in building plot 1





Plate 1: Plan View of post-medieval brick-lined well (008) located within building plot 1

## 5.2 Observation of Building Plot 2

These foundations were excavated in the central area of the eastern side of the site, adjacent to a graveyard. Underlying a layer of demolition rubble (001) was a loosely compacted dark brown sandy loam (101) measuring up to 0.15m thick (same as (002)), which overlay a moderately compacted reddish-brown clayey sand (102) (same as (003)). This uniform stratigraphy was present throughout the trenching and no finds or archaeological features were located within this area. The removal of demolition rubble from this area revealed a fragment of gravestone, which appeared to relate to damaged gravestones in the nearby Providence Chapel burial ground to the W.

## 5.3 Observation of Building Plot 3

The trenching was located directly to the NE of Building Plot 2 on a moderate to gentle slope and was stepped accordingly. The stratigraphy was fairly uniform and similar to that found elsewhere on the site (**Plate 2**). Underlying a recently laid gravel base (201) was a loosely compacted dark brown silty sand with occasional post-medieval CBM and pottery (202), beneath which was a loosely compacted mid brown silty sand with occasional fragments of post-medieval CBM (203). Underlying (203) was a loosely to moderately compacted orangey-brown clayey sand (204) (similar to (003)). No archaeological features, finds or deposits were located within this plot.





Plate 2: General view showing stratigraphy in building plot 3, facing NE

## 6. Conclusion

---

The archaeological observation revealed evidence of post-medieval archaeological features consisting of a brick-lined well and the foundation of a building orientated roughly NW-SE. Both of these features are probably of late 18<sup>th</sup>/19<sup>th</sup> century date and associated with workers' housing provided for the employees of the Phillips tape weaving factory located to the S of the site.

During the removal of demolition rubble carried out in the central western area of the site, a fragment of a gravestone of probable mid-late 19<sup>th</sup> century date was located lying on the surface. It is likely that this came from the disused burial ground of the former Providence Chapel (built 1822) located immediately to the W of the site. No other features, finds or deposits of archaeological significance were identified during this programme of archaeological observation.

## 7. Copyright

---

Border Archaeology shall retain full copyright of any commissioned reports, tender documents or other project documents, under the Copyright, Designs & 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.

## 8. Bibliography

---

Staffordshire Council Historic Environment Record- HER Printout

National Monuments Record Centre, Swindon – NMR Printout

White, W, 1851, *History, Gazetteer and Directory of Staffordshire*, Sheffield.

## 9. Appendix 1: Context Register

CONTEXT NO.	DESCRIPTION
(001)	Loosely compacted dark brown silty sand with frequent demolition material including CBM and concrete. Occasional post-medieval pottery, plastic, metal (iron scrap). Extending over northern two-thirds of site to a depth of 0.1m.
INTERPRETATION:	<i>Modern demolition deposit</i>
(002)	Loosely compacted dark brown sandy loam with occasional post-medieval CBM. Extending over southern end of site to a depth of 0.1m.
INTERPRETATION:	<i>Post-medieval topsoil</i>
(003)	Moderately compacted reddish-brown clayey sand with occasional round pebbles. Extending across site to a depth of >0.6m.
INTERPRETATION:	<i>Natural subsoil</i>
[004]	Cut, rectilinear in plan, corners not within trench. Measures >1m x 0.52m x 0.31m. Break of slope top sharp, sides steeply sloping, break of slope base steeply rounded, base concave. Oriented NW–SE. Filled by (005). Cuts (003).
INTERPRETATION:	<i>Cut of post-medieval wall foundation</i>
(005)	Loosely compacted dark brown silty sand with occasional post-medieval brick and occasional post-medieval pottery. Dimensions: >1.0 x 0.32 x 0.31m. Fills (004).
INTERPRETATION:	<i>Demolition rubble fill of foundation cut [004]</i>
[006]	Cut, roughly circular in plan, measuring 1.5m in diameter and >1m in depth. Break of slope top sharp, sides near vertical, break of slope base, sharp, base flat. Filled by (007), (008) & (009).
INTERPRETATION:	<i>Cut of post-medieval well excavation pit</i>
(007)	Loosely compacted dark brown silty sand with frequent CBM measuring 1.35m x 1.35m x >1m. Fills (007)/(009)
INTERPRETATION:	<i>Post-medieval backfill of well</i>
(008)	Construction of unfrogged brick (running bond), circular in plan, measuring 1.5m in diameter and >1m in depth. Backfilled within by (007). Abuts (009)
INTERPRETATION:	<i>Post-medieval brick-lined well</i>
(009)	Loosely to moderately compacted greyish-brown clayey sand with occasional small fragments of post-medieval CBM. Fills gap between (008) and (006)
INTERPRETATION:	<i>Packing fill for well</i>
(101)	Loosely compacted dark brown sandy loam with occasional post-medieval CBM. Extended over majority of southern end of site to a depth of 0.1m. Same as (002).
INTERPRETATION:	<i>Garden soil (original topsoil)</i>
(102)	Moderately compacted reddish-brown clayey sand with occasional round pebbles. Extended across site to a depth of >0.6m
INTERPRETATION:	<i>Natural subsoil</i>
(201)	Loosely compacted gravel. Dimensions: >13.8m x 8.2m x 0.4m
INTERPRETATION:	<i>Modern hard-standing for current construction</i>
(202)	Loosely compacted dark brown silty sand with occasional post-medieval CBM and pottery. Measures >13.8m x >8.2m x 0.1m–0.2m
INTERPRETATION:	<i>Post-medieval topsoil</i>
(203)	Loosely compacted mid brown silty sand with occasional fragments of post-medieval CBM. Measures >13.8m x >8.2m x 0.1m–0.2m
INTERPRETATION:	<i>Post-medieval subsoil</i>
(204)	Loosely to moderately compacted orangey-brown clayey sand. Measures >13.8m x >8.2m x >0.3m
INTERPRETATION:	<i>Natural soils</i>