

birmingham archaeology

CAMPHILL LANE, WEDNESBURY

ARCHAEOLOGICAL EXCAVATION
2006

UNIVERSITY OF
BIRMINGHAM



Project No. 1542
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**CAMPBILL LANE, WEDNESBURY
ARCHAEOLOGICAL EXCAVATION 2006**

By Phil Mann

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CONTENTS

SUMMARY

1	INTRODUCTION	1
2	ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND	1
3	AIMS AND OBJECTIVES	2
4	METHODOLOGY (FIGS. 2-3)	2
5	RESULTS (FIG. 4).....	2
6	FINDS BY STEPHANIE RATKAI	3
7	DISCUSSION.....	3
8	ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	4
9	REFERENCES.....	4

FIGURES

- 1 Location map of the site within Sandwell
- 2 Location of area investigated within Wednesbury Town Centre; including trial-trenching locations
- 3 Location of Camphill Lane site and other adjoining investigations
- 4 Camphill Lane excavation; simplified site plan

APPENDICES

- 1 Design Brief
- 2 Summary sheet
- 3 Written Scheme of Investigation
- 4 Photo Register

SUMMARY

In December 2006 Birmingham Archaeology undertook an archaeological excavation on behalf of Wm Morrison Supermarkets PLC in advance of proposals for the construction of a new supermarket and petrol filling station in Wednesbury (centred on NGR SO 9862 9490). The area investigated was located to the west of Camphill Lane, Wednesbury. The investigation was intended to provide further evidence of the early post-medieval pottery industry, which was located in an adjoining archaeological excavation further to the west.

The area investigated was found to have been heavily truncated by 20th century cellared structures which had entirely scoured-out any evidence of earlier activity.

CAMPBILL LANE, WEDNESBURY

ARCHAEOLOGICAL EXCAVATION 2006

1 INTRODUCTION

Birmingham Archaeology was commissioned by Wm Morrison Supermarkets PLC (with advice from S R Davis Architects) to undertake an archaeological excavation in advance of a proposed supermarket and petrol filling station development in Wednesbury Town Centre (centred on NGR SO 9862 9490, Figs. 1-2).

The area investigated comprised a grass verge located to the west of Camphill Lane, and to the south of the former Housing Office car parks (Figs. 2-3).

This report outlines the results of archaeological recording undertaken in accordance with a Brief produced by Sandwell MBC (2006; reproduced as Appendix 1), and a Written Scheme of Investigation (Birmingham Archaeology 2006, reproduced as Appendix 2) approved by the council before the fieldwork commenced. The work was undertaken in accordance with the guidelines laid down in Planning Policy Guidance Note 16 (PPG16), and the Institute of Field Archaeologists 'Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Excavations'.

The investigation was informed by an Archaeological Impact Assessment (Lobb 2006) which provided a full map regression, historic background and assessment of archaeological potential.

2 ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

Details of the archaeological assessment (Lobb 2006) will not be repeated in detail here.

The earliest evidence for occupation in Wednesbury is the suggested Iron Age hillfort on Church Hill. Whilst there is no datable evidence of Anglo-Saxon settlement, the place-name evidence suggests activity in this period.

During the medieval period the focus of settlement appears to have moved from Church Hill down to the Market Place (Lobb 2006, fig. 2). The bulk of the archaeological material from Wednesbury comes from the post-medieval period. Pottery production in Wednesbury appears to have increased greatly in the post-medieval period, with numerous sherds of Midlands Purple wares, Cistercian wares, glazed red earthenwares and Midlands Yellow wares being recovered (Lobb 2006). Hodder (1991) suggests that these finds indicate that pottery production occurred as a cottage industry in post-medieval Wednesbury. During the later post-medieval period large quantities of coal and iron were produced in Wednesbury. The 18th century saw a growing industry of gunlock filing and forging in Wednesbury (Greenlade 1976, 35), which extended within an area to the south of Union Street.

Historic mapping (Lobb 2006, figs. 3-6) shows that part of the western frontage of Camphill Lane was developed from 1844. A range of buildings are recorded on maps dated 1890 and 1903 in the southern part of the area investigated. This terrace was

extended further to the north by 1919, although one of the northern buildings was demolished by 1938.

Recent trial-trenching to the northwest of this site (Mann 2007) has identified part of the town ditch, originally cut in the 17th century, and re-cut in the 18th-19th century. The southward continuation of the same feature was recorded to the southwest, where the ditch was enlarged for use in connection with pottery production in the 17th century (Edgeworth and Ratkai in preparation).

3 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

The principle aim of the recording was to determine the character, extent, date, state of preservation and the potential significance of any buried remains. In particular, it was intended to:

- Establish the presence/absence of archaeological remains within the site.
- Determine the nature, extent, condition, character, quality and date of any archaeological remains identified.
- Provide data concerning the development of Wednesbury from the medieval period to the present.
- Contribute to the broader appreciation of the development of the town.

4 METHODOLOGY (FIGS. 2-3)

A JCB excavator was employed, working under continuous archaeological supervision, to remove the modern overburden. Where a cellar was recorded in the extreme southwest of the area investigated, it was recorded photographically before being rapidly backfilled for safety reasons. The remainder of the area investigated was machined down to the first archaeological horizon. Subsequent excavation and cleaning was entirely manual.

All stratigraphic sequences were recorded, even where no archaeology was present. Features were planned using an EDM, and sections were drawn through all cut features and significant vertical stratigraphy at a scale of 1:20. A comprehensive written record was maintained using a continuous numbered context system on pro-forma context and feature cards. Written records and scale plans were supplemented by photographs using digital photography.

Recovered finds were cleaned, marked and remedial conservation work was undertaken as necessary. Treatment of all finds conformed to guidance contained within 'A Strategy for the Care and Investigation of Finds' published by English Heritage.

The site archive will be prepared according to guidelines set down in Appendix 3 of the Management of Archaeology Projects (English Heritage, 1991), the Guidelines for the Preparation of Excavation Archives for Long-term Storage (UKIC, 1990) and Standards in the Museum Care of Archaeological collections (Museum and Art Galleries Commission, 1992). Finds and the paper archive will be deposited with the Community History and Archive Service, Wednesbury Museum, subject to permission from the landowner.

5 RESULTS (FIG. 4)

The upper horizon of natural subsoil (1000), a yellow clay, was reached at 133.136m AOD. In the southwest of the area investigated the subsoil had been heavily truncated by modern demolition rubble and cellar infill below the maximum excavated depth of 1.20m.

In the north of the area investigated, the subsoil was cut by a cellar (Structure 1) measuring 3.12m in length and 3.70m in width internally within the area investigated. Its full dimensions could not be identified within the excavated area. The north-south (1010A, 1011), and east-west (1010) aligned cellar walls consisted of red bricks each measuring 9 x 4 x 3 inches in size, bonded with lime mortar. Built onto the eastern side of the building was a small extension, forming a small alcove or possible chimney base (1012). This measured 0.85m in length by 0.40m wide and was constructed of red bricks each measuring 9 x 4.5 x 3 inches. Backfilling these structures was a black silty clay containing large amounts of rubble (1014), along with fragments of grey concrete floor footings (1008).

Abutting the western side of Structure 1 was a brick built extension (1006) measuring 0.78m in length by 0.90m in width. It was made of red bricks (each measuring 9 x 3 x 4 inches) bonded with white lime mortar. The fill of this structure was different from that of the main cellar itself and consisted of a light brown silt (1007), which may suggest that 1006 was an outhouse to the main building.

In the southeast of the area investigated the subsoil (1000) was also cut by a cellar (Structure 2) of which only the western edge was visible. This wall (1003) measured 0.18m in width and was constructed of red bricks (each measuring 9 x 4.5 x 2 inches). As with Structure 1, there was also a possible outhouse building adjoining the western side of Structure 2. As excavated, this outhouse (1004) measured 0.64m in length by 0.85m in width and was constructed of red bricks each measuring 9 x 4.5 x 3.5 inches. Filling 1004 was a brown silt that contained fragments of brick rubble (1005).

To the west of Structure 2, and the south of Structure 1 was a north-south aligned gully (1002, not illustrated) measuring around 1.2m in width and 0.12m in depth, and which was filled with a blue-grey silty clay (1001). This fill was heavily disturbed by root activity and contained concrete rubble throughout, suggesting that it was derived from demolition.

Sealing these cellar structures was a layer of blue-grey silty clay (1013, not illustrated) that varied in depth across the area investigated from 0.20m-0.35m. In the west of the area investigated it was overlain by a layer of black silty clay (1009) that contained fragments of 17th century pottery. Overlying this layer was the demolition layer (1015) which consisted of brown silty rubble and had areas of red sand throughout. This contained fragments of late 17th-18th century pottery and measured around 0.20-0.40m in depth. This was overlain by the dark brown silty-clay (1016, not illustrated) topsoil.

6 FINDS BY STEPHANIE RATKAI

Layer 1015 contained slip-coated ware dating to the late 17th-18th century. Layer 1009 contained a sherd of black ware and a single sherd of coarseware, both of 17th century date. Only three sherds of pottery were recovered.

7 DISCUSSION

The presence of cellar structures in the excavation area suggests that any medieval-early post-medieval deposits would have been scoured-out during their construction. The identified structures include buildings mapped in 1903, 1919 and 1938 on the western frontage of Camphill Lane. It is not clear from the mapping or the excavated evidence whether their function was domestic or small-scale industrial.

Outside the cellars there was no evidence for medieval or early post-medieval activity, although, admittedly, these undisturbed areas were comparatively small in size. Overall, the area investigated was located within the limits of the late medieval-early post-

medieval boundary ditch recorded by excavation in the area immediately to the west (Edgworth and Ratkai in preparation).

8 ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The project was commissioned by Wm Morrison Supermarkets PLC with advice from S R Davis, Architects. Thanks are due to Alan Broadhead for his co-operation and assistance throughout the project. Thanks also go to Graham Eyre-Morgan and Charlotte Lewis, who monitored the project on behalf of Sandwell Metropolitan Borough Council. Work on site was undertaken by Paul Collins, Sean Daly, Emily Hamilton and Phil Mann (Supervisor). Phil Mann produced the written report which was illustrated by Nigel Dodds, and edited by Alex Jones who also managed the project for Birmingham Archaeology.

9 REFERENCES

Department of the Environment (DoE) 1990 *Planning Policy Guidance Note 16: Archaeology and Planning*.

Edgworth, M, and Ratkai, S, in preparation *Wednesbury Town Centre Development, archaeological Excavation, Post-Excavation Assessment*. BA report 1468C.02.

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Hodder, M A 1991 'Excavations in Wednesbury, 1988 and 1989: The Medieval and Post-Medieval Settlement and the 17th-Century Pottery Industry' *South Staffordshire Archaeological and Historical Society Transactions*, 32, 96-115.

Lobb, M, 2006 *Wednesbury Town Centre: An Archaeological Impact Assessment* BA Report No. 1468C.01.

Mann, P, 2007 *Wednesbury Town Centre Redevelopment, Archaeological Evaluation, Stage 2*, BA Report No. 1518.

Sandwell MBC 2006 *Archaeological Evaluation: Wednesbury Town Centre Phase II, Design Brief*.

APPENDIX 1: DESIGN BRIEF

ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION

WEDNESBURY TOWN CENTRE

SANDWELL MBC

AUGUST 2006

PHASE II



Site: Wednesbury Town Centre land bounded by Union Street, Holyhead Road, Russell Street and Camp Street.

Borough Archaeologist: Graham Eyre-Morgan (0121 569 4025)

Assistant Archaeologist: Charlotte Lewis (0121 569 4217)

Planning Officer: Christine Phillips (0121 569 4040)

Applicant: WM Morrison Supermarkets plc

Agent: Allan Broadhead SRD Architects (0121 569 9234)

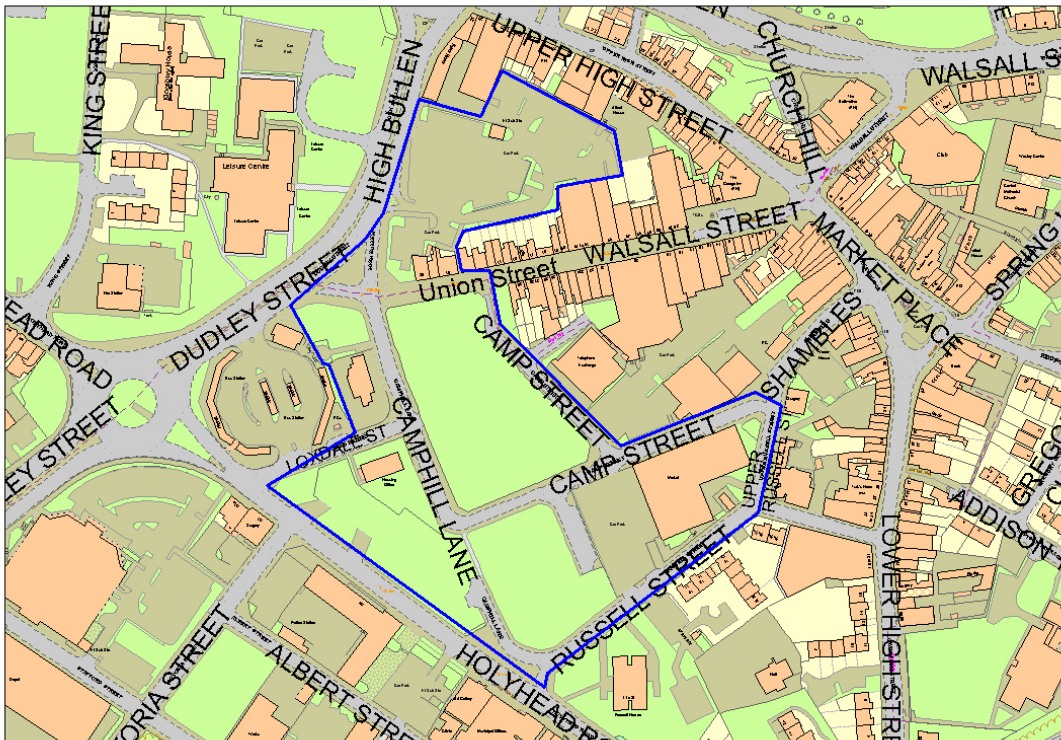
This archaeological brief is only valid for six months. After this period the Borough Archaeologist should be contacted. Any written scheme of investigation resulting from this brief shall only be considered for the same period. The contractor is strongly advised to visit the site before completing their written scheme of investigation, as there may be implications for accurately costing the project.

1. Introduction

The Assistant Archaeologist for Sandwell MBC has prepared this Brief for an Archaeological Evaluation. Planning consent has been granted to WM Morrison Supermarkets plc for redevelopment of Wednesbury Town Centre, land bounded by Union Street, Holyhead Road, Russell Street and Camp Street. Drawing on the results of the Phase 1 Archaeological Impact Assessment completed by Birmingham Archaeology in July 2006 this Brief sets out the mitigation strategy for the evaluation and excavation of the below-ground archaeological remains within the development area. Should substantial archaeological remains be discovered during the evaluation phases, it is possible that a third phase warranting further more extensive archaeological work maybe required before any development can take place. Once completed the results will be deposited at the Community History and Archive Service at Smethwick Library, Wednesbury Museum and National Monument Record Centre where they will be available for public and research consultation.

2. Site Location and Description

The proposed development lies within an “Area of Archaeological Potential” as defined in the Councils Unity Development Plan 2004. The development area is located at land bounded by Union Street, Holyhead Road, Russell Street and Camp Street, Wednesbury NGR 9862 9490. The aim of this investigation is to access the archaeological potential of the area identified in the Phase 1 Archaeological Impact Assessment completed by Birmingham Archaeology in July 2006.



Plan highlighting extent of development area, Wednesbury Town Centre.

Copyright Sandwell MBC 2006

3. Planning Background

3.1 Planning Applications DC/04/42399 and DC/05/44324 has conditional approval, based on Planning Policy Guidance Note 16: Archaeology and Planning (DoE 1990) and Planning Policy Guidance Note 15: Planning and the Historic Environment (DoE and DNH 1994) together with the Councils UDP policies, the following condition has been attached to the planning permission of this site:

“ No development, demolition or preliminary groundworks of any kind shall take place until the applicant has secured the implementation of a programme of archaeological work in accordance with a written scheme of investigation which has been submitted to, and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority.”

3.2 Based on the advice given in *Planning Policy Guidance Note 16: Archaeology and Planning* (DoE 1990, paras 21-22) the evaluation is designed provide sufficient information on the presence/absence, nature, quality and extent of any below ground remains. If present, the investigation will identify any archaeological remains thereby enabling the formulation, if appropriate, of an additional programme of excavation; should the deposits be of ‘national importance’ there will be a presumption in favour of their in-situ preservation.

This Brief and the resulting Contractors’ Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) will ensure that the requirements of the Phase II Survey are completed to an appropriate standard.

4. Archaeological Background

The site is within close proximity to the historic core of the medieval town, possible Anglo Saxon burgh and possible Iron Age hill fort, the 14th Century church of St Bartholomew’s stands a short distance to the north. Due to recent excavations at Lower High Street and Meeting Street, the extent of the medieval core of the town have been extended with early pottery finds and large ditch, thus this area could prove a link between the two sites recently discovered. It is believed that the location of the proposed development was the focus of later medieval and post medieval occupation. It has been suggested that that alignment of the Roman road running from the Roman Fort at Metchley to the Fort at Stretton suggests that it should be either in or close to the study area. A full historical record can be found in Birmingham Archaeology’s Phase 1 report, July 2006.

Recent excavations at Meeting Street revealed a large ditch and contained a large assemblage of early post-medieval pottery shards. The report for “Archaeological Trial Trenching Land Adjacent to No 4 Meeting Street” is held with the SMR Officer Fay de Souza. An open area excavation was undertaken at the Lower High Street, Wednesbury by Ironbridge Archaeology in 2005. A large assemblage of medieval and post medieval pottery was discovered which

from first glances dated from 13th to 18th Centuries. In this assemblage was a large amount of saggars and wasters, which suggested the close proximity to a late medieval pottery kiln. Further information can be obtained from the Borough Archaeologist. Excavations by Mike Hodder at the Shambles/Upper Russell Street and Market Street have all revealed medieval remains. Should archaeology be discovered it is possible that further archaeological work may be required at the site before any development may take place.

5. Requirement for Work

5.1 The purpose of the archaeological investigation is to locate and identify any surviving remains within the constraint area; in this particular instance this office wishes to know the extent, the date, nature and state of preservation of any archaeological deposits, which may be present under the area, proposed for development. The work must also assess the relative importance of these deposits, and the potential loss of any archaeological information by the development, therefore substantiating any need for further excavation or change in the planning consent.

5.2 A 5% sample of the development area will be investigated by trial trenching and the layout should be designed to ensure uniform coverage across the site; a trench plan must be appended to the specification.

5.3 The site-specific aims are:

- To establish the presence/absence of archaeological remains within the development area
- To determine the nature, extent, condition, character, quality and date of any archaeological remains encountered
- To provide further information on the origins and development of Wednesbury from the medieval period to the present day
- To contribute to any existing corpus of academic knowledge
- To make available to interested parties the results of the investigation subject to any confidentiality restrictions

5.4 The evaluation recommended above is only the first stage in the archaeological investigation of each of the sites recommended. The scope of any further archaeological

recording on each of the sites will depend on the results of the preliminary (and a third phase if appropriate) evaluation of surviving archaeological deposits.

5.5 If evaluation indicates that significant archaeological evidence survives on the site, and would be negatively impacted by the proposed redevelopment, a further stage of detailed archaeological excavation and recording will be carried out, in accordance with a site-specific Written Scheme of Investigation approved by the Assistant Archaeologist, which sets out specific aims of further recording work.

6.0 General Methodology

6.1 The evaluation shall be supported by a Written Scheme of Investigation.

6.2 The contractor is expected to follow the Code of Conduct of the Institute of Field Archaeologists.

6.3 Details including the name, qualifications and experience, of the site director and all other project personnel (including specialist staff) shall be supplied to the Assistant Archaeologist as part of the written scheme of investigation.

6.4 Notification of the supervisor/project manager's name and the members of the team shall be provided in writing to Assistant Archaeologist at least one week in advance of commencement of work.

6.5 The site code for this project is WTCP2WS06.

6.6 All the latest Health and Safety guidelines shall be followed on site.

6.7 Should the client wish to curtail the investigation for any reason at any point in advance of its completion the contractor will still be expected to produce a full report including specialist finds assessments within the timetable set out below.

6.8 The IFA's *Standards and Guidance for Archaeological Evaluations* should be used for additional guidance in the production of the written scheme of investigation, the content of the report, and the general execution of the project.

7. Evaluation Methodology

7.1 The contractor shall ensure detailed study of all mains service locations and avoid damage to these.

7.2 It is recommended that a minimum of 5% of the area to be developed is investigated by trial trenching. The trial trenches will be machine excavated using a toothless ditching bucket, and under the supervision and to the satisfaction of a professional archaeologist. The exposed sub-soil or archaeological horizon will be hand cleaned in all trenches and any archaeological deposits or negative features planned.

7.4 At least 50% of all contained features shall be excavated. A stated percentage of structural and linear features to be excavated shall be provided in the WSI. For those trenches where substantial nineteenth and twentieth century masonry remains are encountered hand dug test pits will be excavated within the trench in order to examine the presence/absence of earlier remains. NOTE: In some circumstances it may be necessary to use shoring to support the sides of the trench, but advice must be sought from the Assistant Archaeologist before employing this methodology.

7.5 Details of how all archaeological contexts and artefacts will be excavated, surveyed, recovered and recorded shall be provided. The site grid will be tied to the national grid.

7.6 Details of the site planning policy shall be given in the WSI. The normal preferred policy for the scale of archaeological site plans is 1:20 and sections at 1:10, unless circumstances indicate that other scales would be more appropriate.

7.7 The photographic record shall consist of photographs in both monochrome and colour mediums with negatives if 35mm or medium format cameras are used in preference to digital cameras. This shall include both general and feature specific photographs, a photographic scale (including north arrow) shall be included in the case of detailed photographs. A

photographic register and supporting plan detailing as a minimum feature number, location, and direction of shot shall accompany the photographic record.

7.8 The contractor must arrange, through a suitably qualified specialist, the assessment of the environmental and metallurgical potential of the site through the examination of suitable deposits. Guidance should be sought from the appropriate English Heritage Regional Advisor in Archaeological Science and details of the methodology included within the WSI.

8.0 Finds

8.1 All finds, where appropriate, shall be washed and marked with both the site code and context number.

8.2 The WSI shall include an agreed list of specialist consultants who might be required to conserve and/or report on finds, and advise or report on other aspects of the investigation.

8.3 Finds work should be to accepted professional standards and adhere to the Institute of Field Archaeologists *Guidelines for Finds Work*. Details of the finds retrieval policy must be included within the WSI.

8.4 The requirements for conservation and storage shall be agreed with Wednesbury Museum prior to the start of work, and confirmed in writing with the Assistant Archaeologist.

9.0 Results

9.1 The draft full report including all specialist assessments of artefact assemblages shall be submitted to the Assistant Archaeologist within six weeks of completing the fieldwork for approval. Once approved a total of eight copies plus a copy on CD-ROM are to be supplied to the Assistant Archaeologist for general distribution.

9.2 The report must contain:

- The aims and methods adopted during the course of the evaluation.

- Detailed results including a suitable conclusion and discussion. This must be linked to the research objectives cited above and consider the sites in their local, regional and national context.
- An assessment of the local, regional national importance of the site. The latter should be based on the criteria for scheduling as set out in Annex 4 of PPG 16 (DoE 1990).
- Impact Assessment and recommended mitigation strategy will be used to assess the impact of the proposal on the surviving archaeological resource.
- The contractor is also expected to formulate a mitigation strategy and future research programme. The latter should be based on national/regional/local research frameworks and identify the aims/objectives of any future excavation.
- Although the emphasis should be on those deposits that are likely to be destroyed, the wider potential the site must also be considered
- A concise non-technical summary of the project results
- All specialist reports and assessments
- Site location plan, copies of any historical maps and a representative sample of the photographs including colour prints
- Location plan of trenches in relation to the proposed development. All corners of each trench shall be given a 10 figure grid reference
- A section/s within each trench showing the depth of deposits including the present ground level with Ordnance Datum, vertical and horizontal scale
- Sufficient plans by period and area to aid interpretation
- Artefact illustrations that would be submitted in any future publication

9.3 The following appendices should also be included:

- Location and summary of the archive contents
- Completed summary sheet (copy attached to brief)
- Photographic register
- Archaeological brief, the approved contractors' written scheme of investigation together with the completed pro-forma and site location plan which were submitted as part of the planning application

9.4 The proposed format of the report will be described within the WSI.

10.0 Archive

10.1 Before commencing any fieldwork, the Contractor must contact the Community History and Archives Service, Smethwick Library (High Street, Smethwick, West Midlands B661AB. Tel. 0121 5582561), to determine the requirements for the deposition of the archive.

10.2 The archive should include the record photographs, negatives, colour slides, film register, and digital information together with a copy of the Report.

10.3 Photographic prints should be re-produced at a minimum of five by four inches and labelled on the back using indelible ink with the film and frame number, date, photographers name together with the site code, name and grid reference; the photographs being mounted in archival quality sleeves.

10.4 It is the responsibility of the Contractor to meet the Community History and Archives Service requirements with regard to the preparation of material for deposition.

10.5 Written notification of the commencement of fieldwork shall be given to Community History and Archives Service at the same time as the Assistant Archaeologist.

10.6 A summary of the contents of the archive shall be supplied to Assistant Archaeologist at the time of deposition.

11.0 Monitoring

11.1 The Assistant Archaeologist will be responsible for monitoring progress and standards throughout the project and should be kept regularly informed during fieldwork, interpretation and reporting stages.

11.2 Written Notification of the start date will be given to the Assistant Archaeologist at least one week before the commencement of work and once the fieldwork stage of the investigation has been completed.

12.0 Contractors Written Scheme of Investigation

12.1 Any variations to the WSI shall be agreed in writing with the Assistant Archaeologist before being implemented.

12.2 This Brief has been written following a cursory examination of the site by the Assistant Archaeologist, potential contractors are therefore strongly advised to carry out their own inspection before submitting a written quotation.

12.3 If on first visiting the site or at any time during the recording exercise, it appears that:

- i) part or the whole of the site is not amenable to the recording programme outlined above, and/or
- ii) an alternative approach may be more appropriate or likely to produce more informative results, and/or
- iii) any features that should be recorded as having a bearing on the interpretation of the site have been omitted,

then it is expected that the Contractor will contact the Assistant Archaeologist as a matter of urgency.

For further information regarding the content of this Brief please contact the author at the address below. As part of our desire to provide a quality service, we would welcome any comments you may have on the content and presentation of this Archaeological Brief.

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APPENDIX 2: SUMMARY SHEET**SANDWELL MBC SMR**

Site name/Address: Wednesbury Town Centre	
Borough: Sandwell	NGR: 9862 9490
Type of Work: Phase 2 Archaeological Evaluation	Site Code: WTCP2WS06
Contractor: Birmingham Archaeology	Date of Work: Archaeological recording
Location of Finds/Curating Museum:	
Title of Report: Camphill Lane, Wednesbury, Archaeological Recording 2006	
SUMMARY OF FIELDWORK RESULTS: Area investigated to west of Camphill Lane, Wednesbury. <u>Purpose of investigation:</u> to locate further evidence of pottery industry recorded in adjoining excavation (to the southwest), and to further understand the development of the area after the end of that industry. <u>Results.</u> Area investigated had been scoured-out by 20th century cellars; no pre-20th century features or deposits were recorded as surviving.	
Author of Summary: AEJ	Date of Summary: 9/3/07

APPENDIX 3: WRITTEN SCHEME OF INVESTIGATION

Archaeological Excavation, Post-Excavation Assessment, Full Post-Excavation Analysis, Reporting and Deposition of Archive

Wednesbury Town Centre:

Grass verge between Camphill Lane, northeastern edge of completed excavation and southern edge of Housing Office Car Park
(centred on NGR 98629490)

1.0: INTRODUCTION

This document is based upon information provided by an archaeological impact assessment (Lobb 2006), trial-trenching, and area excavation undertaken in adjoining areas of the Wednesbury Town Centre development.

While the broad aims and methodology described in this document will be followed, certain specific details may require to be altered as further information becomes available. Such variations would be agreed in advance with the Borough Archaeologist, Sandwell MBC.

An archaeological excavation ('preservation by record') is required in advance of the construction of a new Morrisons supermarket and associated developments within an area identified by Sandwell MBC for preservation of the archaeology by record, in accordance with Planning Policy Guidance Note 16 'Archaeology and Planning', and Sandwell MBC UDP policies.

To fulfil the planning condition, the archaeological excavation must be followed by a post-excavation assessment of the results, as a preliminary to detailed (including specialist) analysis of the stratigraphic and finds data, followed by publication in a recognised archaeological journal.

The scope of this document is limited to an excavation in the area of the grass verge identified above. The extent of the area for excavation may require variation should live services be identified within it.

Should further archaeological work be required by Sandwell MBC in other parts of the Wednesbury Town Centre redevelopment, separate written schemes would be prepared.

2.0: SITE LOCATION

The archaeological impact assessment and trial-trenching examined a development area also extending to the north of Union Street, and to the north of the roughly east-west aligned section of Camp Street. The scope of the requirement for the preservation by record of below-ground archaeological deposits as described in this document is limited to an area of grass verge to the west of Camphill Lane, to the south of the Housing Office Car Park, and to the northeast of the completed excavation.

3.0: ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

The proposed supermarket development is located within an area of 'Archaeological Potential' within the Sandwell MBC Unitary Development Plan. To the north of the area described in this document trial-trenching within the Housing Office car park identified a roughly north-south aligned ditch, backfilled with early post-medieval pottery. The same ditch was more extensively investigated within an excavation to the southwest. Here the ditch was re-cut by a series of pits associated with adjoining pottery production, and backfilled with kiln waste products. The ditch is thought to define the western boundary of the medieval town. Thus, the area identified for excavation within the grass verge lies within the extreme western limit of the late medieval-early post-medieval settlement. Nineteenth century mapping indicates that the western Camphill Lane frontage was comparatively little built-up. Therefore, the archaeological potential of the grass verge area is thought to be high.

The site lies within an area of archaeological potential, defined by Sandwell MBC Unitary Development Plan (2004). The site is located close to the possible Iron Age hill fort, Saxon burgh, and to the historic core of the medieval town. The suggested alignment of the Roman road from Metchley to Stretton could lie near, or even within the site. The church of St Bartholomew, which originated in the 14th century is located just to the north of the site. The original medieval focus of settlement may have been sited on the north of Church Hill. Later, settlement may have extended to the northeast.

There are a number of documentary references to pottery in Wednesbury (cited in Hodder 1992) in the 16th to 18th-centuries. The raw material derived from Monway Field to the west of the town. During this period potting was undertaken at a domestic scale in small workshops (Hodder 1992). Recent work at Lower High Street and Meeting Street has expanded the extent of the medieval settlement. At the former site a large group of medieval and post-medieval pottery was recovered, including possible evidence for pottery manufacture. At the latter site a substantial ditch was identified, containing early post-medieval pottery. Earlier work at Shambles/Upper Russell Street and Market Street also identified medieval and early post-medieval remains.

4.0: EXCAVATION

4.1: Aims

Wednesbury may have been an important centre of late medieval-early post-medieval pottery production, although the evidence is presently limited to three excavations (Hodder 1989; Ironbridge Archaeology 2006 and Birmingham Archaeology September-November 2006). The proposed excavation provides the opportunity to study the pottery industry in late medieval-early post-medieval Wednesbury, and to place it within the broader topographic and economic development of the town in this period.

The main aim of the excavation is to provide details of the late medieval-early post-medieval settlement and pottery industry in Wednesbury. In particular, the excavation is intended to:

- Provide an understanding of the layout and function of the features, including peripheral features, associated with pottery production.
- Recover pottery associated with on site manufacture, and domestic activity.
- Provide an understanding of the sequence of site activity.
- Place the pottery production features in particular within their contemporary urban setting.

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It is possible that earlier medieval deposits may also survive within the area for preservation by record. The excavation provides an opportunity to examine an area immediately adjoining the presumed medieval street frontage.

4.2: Method

Within the area for excavation overburden would be removed by a JCB excavator with a toothless ditching bucket, working under continuous archaeological control to expose the uppermost archaeological horizon. Thereafter, all excavation of medieval/early post-medieval deposits/features will be by hand. The overburden would be stored outside the excavated areas for the duration of the archaeological fieldwork (ie the excavation would be undertaken as a single, uninterrupted operation).

The archaeological fieldwork would involve in turn:

- Archaeological monitoring during removal of overburden.
- Manual cleaning, as appropriate, followed by base-planning of the machined surface.
- Hand-excavation of archaeological features and deposits.

Subject to review in consultation with the Borough Archaeologist during the excavation, hand-excavation will involve:

- Discrete features (e.g. pits and post-holes), minimum 50% sample of each feature.
- Industrial features, eg those associated with pottery production, will probably require 100% samples.
- Ditches, sample of 20% by length.
- Structural features, 25-50% of beam-slots etc. by length.

Areas adjoining live services will not be excavated.

Human remains

No excavation of human remains would be undertaken except in accordance with the conditions of a Home Office Licence. The local Coroner would be informed.

Recording

Recording would be by means of pre-printed pro-formas for contexts and cuts, supplemented by plans (1:50 and 1:20 as appropriate), sections (1:50 and 1:20), and monochrome print and colour slide photography.

Finds

The finds will be cleaned, marked and bagged. Necessary conservation work would be undertaken. A metal detector would be used as an aid to finds recovery.

The finds will be marked with a site code to be supplied by the Borough Archaeologist.

Environmental sampling

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All datable features and deposits will be sampled objectively for the recovery of charred or waterlogged plant remains; the latter would also be sampled for pollen and insect remains.

The excavation edges would be battered, for safety.

Surveying

The site will be tied to the National Grid.

5.0: STAFFING

The excavation would be managed for Birmingham Archaeology by Alex Jones. The supervisor will be assisted by two experienced archaeological site assistants.

Specialist staff would be:

Stephanie Ratkai, post-Roman pottery

Erica Macey, small finds

Dr Emma Tetlow, environmental remains

Dr Andrew Howard, Institute of Archaeology and Antiquity, University of Birmingham, geoarchaeology

Analysis and reporting of finds will follow the Standard and Guidance for Finds Work (IFA, 1999).

6.0: REPORTING

Reporting would be undertaken in two stages.

The first stage of reporting would involve the preparation of a post-excavation assessment, in accordance with The Management of Archaeology Projects 2 (English Heritage), to include a site narrative, an appropriate level of illustrations (site plans), and specialist assessments of the finds and environmental data. Following approval from the Assistant Archaeologist, the work programme outlined in the assessment would then be implemented in full.

The assessment will contain:

- Introduction, aims and methodology
- Results, arranged by phase
- Specialist assessments
- Updated Project Design, based on the research aims set down in this document
- Task list, leading to publication of the final report
- Site plan, phase plans, plus individual feature section (as appropriate)
- Copies of appropriate historical maps
- Selection of appropriate photographs
- Site matrix
- Appendices containing a summary of the archive contents/ summary sheet/ photographic register/ archaeological brief/ written scheme of investigation/ completed pro-forma and site location plan submitted with the planning application.

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The second stage of reporting would involve the preparation of a report for the *Transactions of the Staffordshire Archaeological Society*, including a site narrative, interpretation and discussion of the evidence, supported by appropriate finds/environmental specialist reports and a discussion and conclusion of the evidence. If the results were of national importance then publication in the Birmingham Archaeology British Archaeological Reports monograph series would be considered.

In addition to the above a short summary report would also be prepared for inclusion in *West Midlands Archaeology and Medieval Archaeology or Post-Medieval Archaeology*, as appropriate. An online OASIS form will also be completed.

7.0: ARCHIVE

The excavation archive will be deposited with the Community History and Archive Service at Smethwick Library, Wednesbury Museum and the National Monument Record Centre, within a reasonable time of the completion of the fieldwork, and after consultation with the Assistant Archaeologist.

8.0: GENERAL

All project staff will adhere to the Code of Conduct of the Institute of Field Archaeologists.

The project will follow the requirements set down in the Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Field Excavation prepared by the Institute of Field Archaeologists.

A Risk Assessment will be prepared prior to commencement of fieldwork.

9.0: REFERENCES

Hodder, M A, 1992 Excavations in Wednesbury, 1988 and 1989: the medieval and post-medieval settlement and the 17th-century pottery industry, *Transactions of the South Staffordshire Archaeological and Historical Society*, 32, 96-115.

Lobb, M, 2006 *Wednesbury Town Centre, Archaeological Impact Assessment, 2006*. BA Report no. 1468.

APPENDIX 4: PHOTOGRAPHIC REGISTERS

Digital BA 1542
Film number 1

<i>No</i>	<i>Description</i>	<i>Orientation</i>	<i>Scale</i>	<i>Initials</i>
1	General site shot	W	-	EH
2	General site shot	W	-	EH
3	General site shot	W	-	EH
4	General site shot	SW	-	EH
5	General site shot	SW	-	EH
6	General site shot	SW	-	EH
7	General shot south end of site	W	-	EH
8	General shot south end of site	W	-	EH
9	General shot south end of site	N	-	EH
10	General shot south end of site	N	-	EH
11	General shot south end of site	N	-	EH
12	General shot south end of site	N	-	EH
13	General shot south end of site	NW	-	EH
14	General shot south end of site	NW	-	EH
15	Arch close up	NE	-	PM
16	General shot south end of site	S	-	PM
17	General shot south end of site	S	-	PM
18	Concrete floor	S	-	EH
19	Concrete floor	N	-	EH
20	Machining shot	SW	-	EH
21	Machining shot	E	-	EH
22	Pre-excavation site shot	W	-	EH
23	Pre-excavation site shot	S	-	EH
24	Pre-excavation site shot	S	-	EH
25	Cables	W	-	EH
26	Cables	N	-	EH
27	Pre-excavation site shot	N	-	EH
28	Pre-excavation site shot	N	-	EH
29	Pre-sxcavation site shot	N	-	EH
30	Cables	E	-	EH
31	General site shot	S	-	EH
32	General site shot	SE	-	EH
33	Post-excavation site shot	S	-	PM
34	Post-excavation site shot	S	-	PM
35	Post-excavation site shot	S	-	PM
36	Post-excavation site shot	S	-	PM

Digital BA 1542
Film number 2

<i>No</i>	<i>Description</i>	<i>Orientation</i>	<i>Scale</i>	<i>Initials</i>
37	Post-excavation site shot	SE	-	PM
38	Post-excavation site shot	SE	-	PM
39	Post-excavation site shot	NE	-	PM
40	Post-excavation site shot	E	-	PM
41	Post-excavation site shot	N	-	PM
42	1002, north facing section	S	-	PM
43	1002, north facing section	S	-	PM
44	Walls 1006, 1010	SE	-	PM
45	Walls 1006, 1010	N	-	PM
46	Wall 1006	S	-	SD
47	Wall 1010	S	-	SD
48	Wall 1006, sondage	N	1x2m	SD
49	Wall 1010	S	1x2m	SD
50	Walls to south of 1014	E	1x2m	SD
51	Walls to south of 1014	E	1x2m	SD
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Colour slide BA
Film number 3

<i>No</i>	<i>Description</i>	<i>Orientation</i>	<i>Scale</i>	<i>Initials</i>
1	10359, Trench B	N	1x2, 1x1	AW
2	10359, Trench B	W	1x2, 1x1	AW
3	10359, Trench B	W	1x2, 1x1	AW
4	10359, Trench B	SW	1x2, 1x1	AW
5	10359, Trench B	SW	1x2, 1x1	AW
6	10359, Trench B	E	1x2, 1x1	AW
7	10359, Trench B	E	1x2, 1x1	AW
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Fig.1

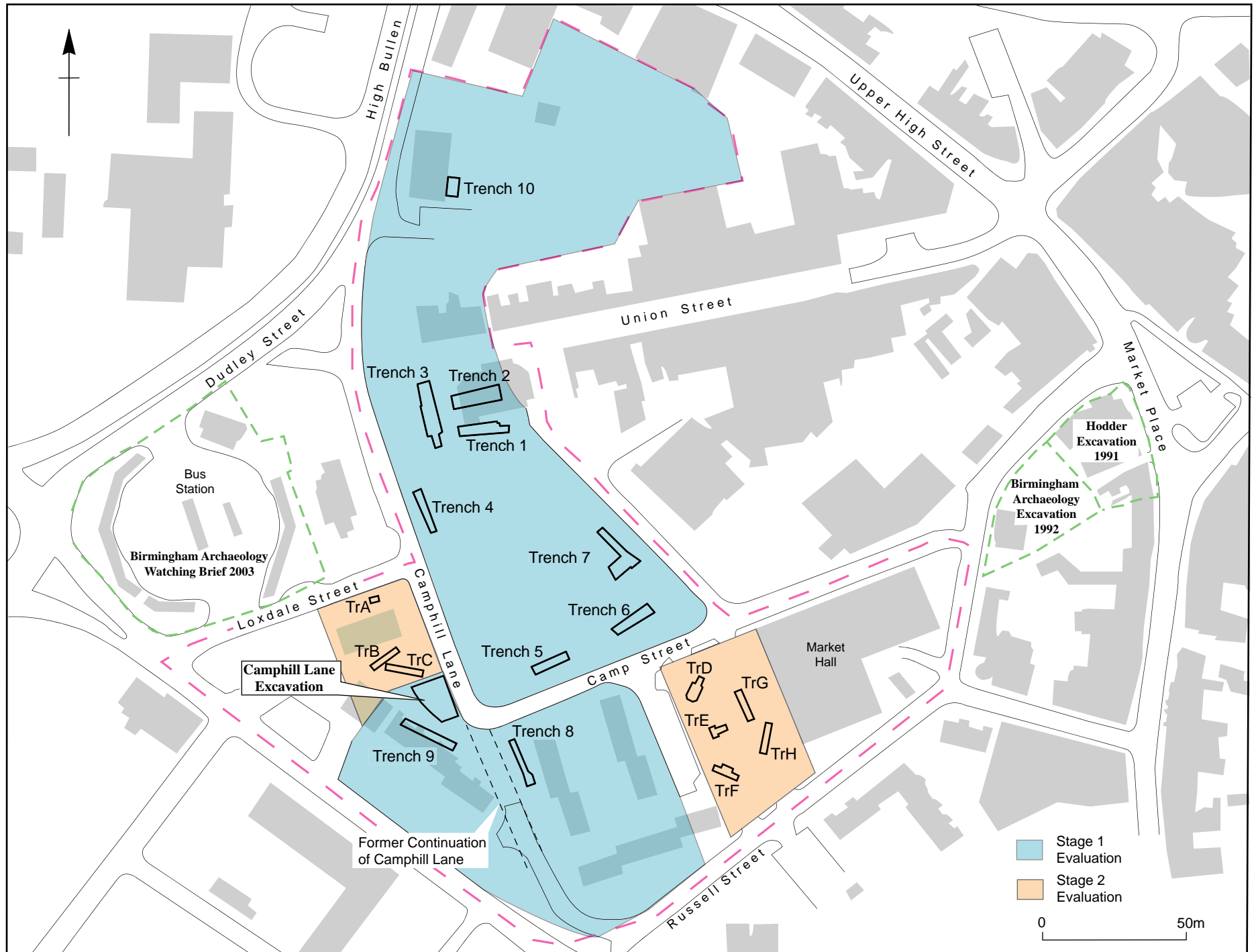


Fig.2

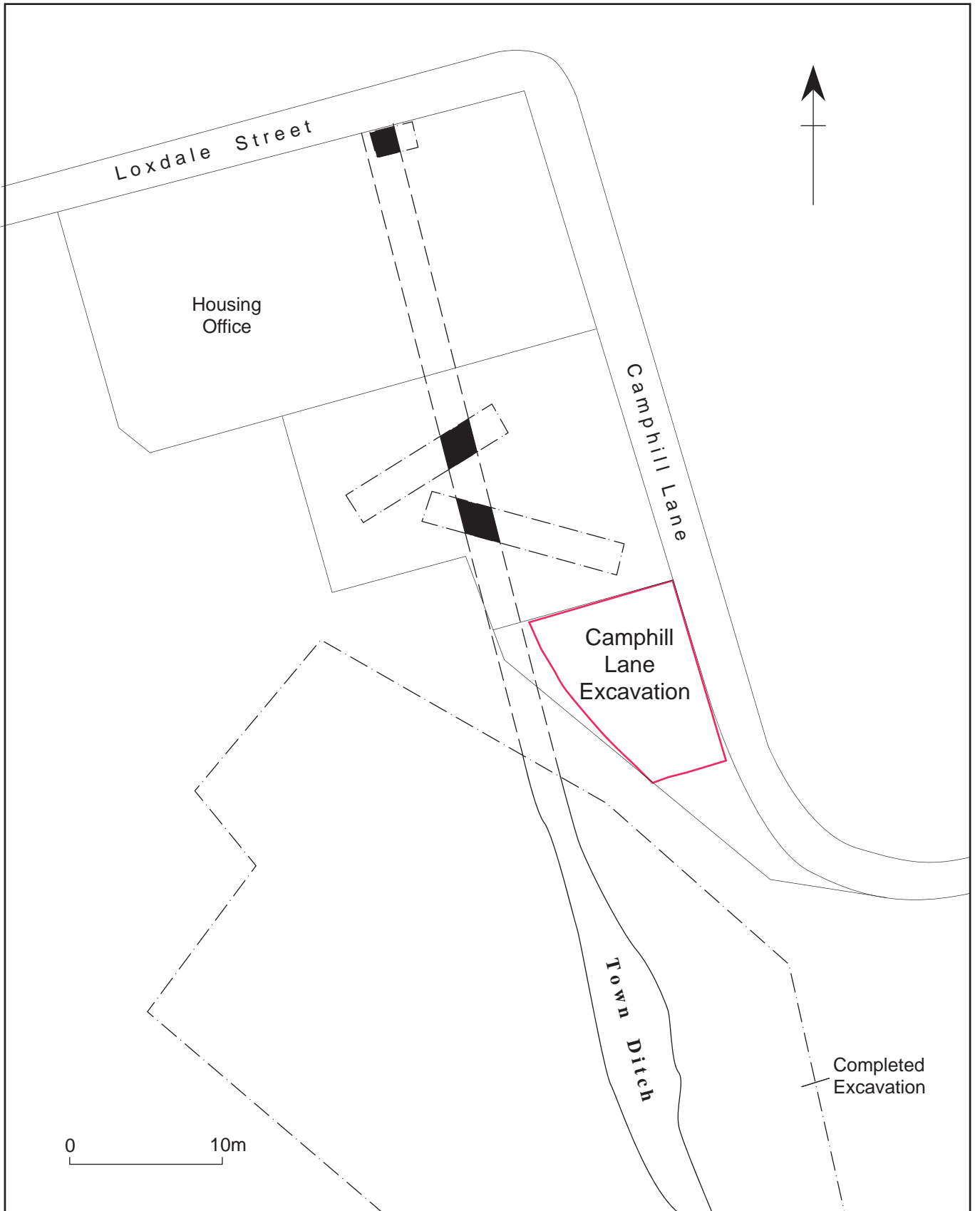


Fig.3

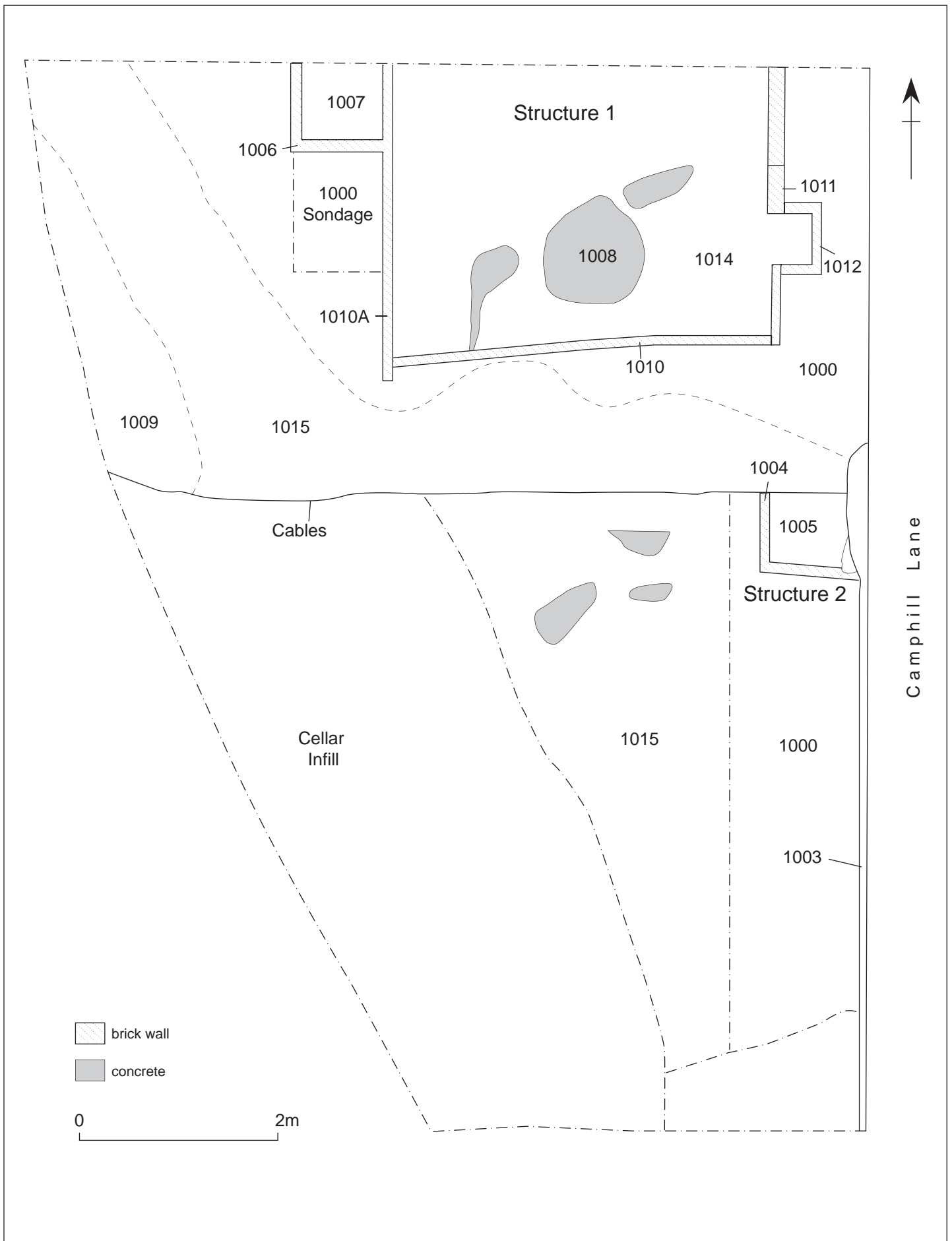


Fig.4