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Former Carriage Shed,
Oswestry Railway Lands,
Oswald Road, Oswestry,
Shropshire.

An Archaeological Watching Brief
2006

UNIVERSITY OF BIRMINGHAM

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Former Carriage Shed, Oswestry Railway Lands, Oswald Road, Oswestry, Shropshire.

An Archaeological Watching Brief 2006

By

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For

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FORMER CARRIAGE SHED, OSWESTRY RAILWAY LANDS, OSWALD ROAD, OSWESTRY, SHROPSHIRE: AN ARHCAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF, 2006.

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SUMMARY

In November 2006, Birmingham Archaeology carried out an archaeological watching brief on the site of a former carriage shed at Oswestry Railway Lands, Oswald Road, Oswestry, Shropshire (NGR SJ 2952/3002). The work was carried out in order retrieve associated finds, for possible future display. A concrete pad is all that remained of the carriage shed structure. During this watching brief the removal of this concrete pad was observed prior to a future residential development on the site. It was found that within and beneath this concrete pad were three sets of, railway track with their associated railway chairs, and some sleepers, gas and oil outlets, and other railway related ironwork.

FORMER CARRIAGE SHED, OSWESTRY RAILWAY LANDS, OSWALD ROAD, OSWESTRY, SHROPSHIRE: AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF, 2006.

1 INTRODUCTION

In November 2006 Birmingham Archaeology carried out an archaeological watching brief at a former carriage shed, Oswestry Railway Land, Oswald Road, Oswestry, Shropshire. The work was commissioned by Mouchel Parkman Services Ltd in advance of a proposed residential development (Planning Application Number 05/13734/OUT).

This report outlines the results of the watching brief, which was carried out on the 9th and 10th of November 2006. This watching brief was carried out in accordance with the Institute of Field Archaeologists Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Watching Briefs (IFA 1994).
The watching brief conformed to a Written Scheme of Investigation by Birmingham Archaeology 2006 (see appendix), which was approved by the Shropshire County Council prior to implementation, in accordance with guidelines laid down in Planning Policy Guidance Note 16 (DoE 1990).

The full site archive includes all artefactual remains recovered from the site. Finds and the paper archive will be deposited with the Oswestry Railway Museum, subject to permission from the landowner.

2 LOCATION

The Oswestry Railway Lands are located to the north of Oswestry town centre, at Oswald Road, (hereinafter referred to as The Study Area, Fig. 1, centred on NGR SJ2952 3002). The carriage shed is located to the east of the railway line, and to the west of the former line of Wat's Dyke (hereinafter referred to as The Site, Fig. 2).

3 ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

A desk-based assessment of the study area was carried out by Hislop (2002). The results of this assessment informed further archaeological work, which took the form of an evaluation (Krawiec 2006). This evaluation trench (Fig. 2) located the northern edge of Wat's Dyke. No bank material survived in-situ, whilst the fills proved sterile with regard to artefacts or organic remains. A walkover survey was undertaken in the area of the former carriage shed during this archaeological evaluation. The concrete hardstanding for the shed was the only surviving part of the building. At the northern end of the former building were three sets of tracks, with associated buffers. Remains of the drainage system for the shed were also observed.

> "…the next phase of activity on the site is the arrival of the railway in 1848 the scale of which grew exponentially, culminating in the creation of the headquarters of the Cambrian Railways. This involved the merging of Oswestry and Newton Railway and the Oswestry, Ellesmere and Whitchurch Railway. The site was extensively developed with the building of a substantial locomotive works, carriage shed, loading wharf and an impressive stationhouse. The development of the site continued until 1926 when there was an 'increase in the number of sidings to the south-east of the station resulting in the expansion into the fields west of Wat's Dyke' (Hislop 2002:5). The station gradually became less important

> and was scaled down with the demolition and removal of additional tracks and associated building in the late 1960s".

Extract from Krawiec (2006).

4 AIMS

The aim of the watching brief was to recover finds exposed during removal of the former carriage shed base. The watching brief was maintained within the area of the former carriage shed only. Finds were retrieved by context for possible future display.

5 METHODOLOGY

An experienced archaeologist attended the site to monitor groundworks. Groundworks observed included the removal of the concrete pad on which the carriage shed once stood.

Following the stripping of the concrete pad the machined surface was inspected, and sufficient hand-cleaning was undertaken to facilitate the definition of archaeological, or possible archaeological features and deposits.

Recording

Recording was by means of pre-printed pro-formas for contexts and features, supplemented by digital photography (Nikon D50 SLR camera) of the work in progress and of relevant finds.

Finds

Finds were recovered by context and were washed where appropriate, marked and bagged.

6 RESULTS

The concrete pad (1020) upon which the railway carriage shed stood was entirely removed by machine during the watching brief (Fig 2, Plates 1 and 2). Below this was a layer of clinker and ash (1021) that appeared to cover the entire site. This layer was not removed and the natural subsoil was not exposed. Upon removal of the concrete slab no further archaeological features were apparent.

The removal of the concrete pad helped provide an insight into the laying down of the railway tracks within the structure itself (Plate 3). There were three sections of track with buffers at the north end. It would appear that the tracks and their associated chairs were balanced-upon up to five courses of bricks at a number of stages along their length, particularly in areas where one section of track was riveted to another. It seems that the concrete was then poured around these tracks and left to set. Large 'I' -beams were inserted in the corners of the pad to support the carriage shed structure.

A number of finds/fixtures were contained within the concrete pad. The vast majority of these were made of iron. These included gas and oil outlets, which were set into circular collars in the concrete. These survived at the northern end of the concrete pad (Plates 4, 5 and 6). In addition sections of the track and railway chairs were recovered (Plate 7). Perforated manhole

covers in the centre of each of the tracks connected to a central manhole. This was situated between the two sets of tracks on the eastern side of the shed to form the main drainage system (Plate 8, 9, and 10). Three different types of brick were uncovered (Plate 11), two of which were stamped 'Bridgenorth', and the other 'Duffington'.

An iron grill (Plate 12), which may have been part of a boiler or furnace, was uncovered underneath the concrete pad.

A cursory walkover of the study area proved rather fruitful, as a monogrammed oil and gas outlet cover reading 'GWR Oil and Gas' was discovered close to the railway platform (Plate 13). It would appear that this is the type of cover, which would have sealed the oil and gas outlets found within the concrete pad. This walkover also revealed further iron artefacts relating to the railways, including a carriage coupling (Plate 14).

7 FINDS

Finds recovered from 1020 were iron oil/ gas outlet collars x 3, iron oil/ gas outlet cover x 1, a section of track and 2 iron chairs, iron manhole covers x 2, a train coupling and samples of 3 types of brick two of which were stamped 'Bridgenorth', and the other 'Duffington'.. An iron grill was recovered from 1021. An unstratfied surface find was an oil and gas outlet cover with the words 'GWR Oil and Gas'.

8 ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The project was commissioned by Mouchel Parkman Services Ltd. Thanks go to Paul Barker of Mouchel Parkman Services Ltd. Thanks are due to Sam Davies of Johnson, Paul, and Bloomer for his co-operation and assistance throughout the project. Thanks are also due to Adrian Murray, the site manager for his assistance during the watching brief. Michael Watson monitored the project on behalf of Shropshire County Council. The watching brief was undertaken by Shane Kelleher. Shane Kelleher produced the written report, which was illustrated by Nigel Dodds, and edited by Laurence 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.*

Hislop, M.J. 2002 *Oswestry Railway Lands: An archaeological desk-based Assessment, Birmingham, Birmingham University Field Archaeology Unit Report No. 952.*

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Krawiec, K. 2006 *Former Railway Lands, Oswald Road, Oswestry, Shropshire: An Archaeological Evaluation 2006,* Birmingham Archaeology Report No. 1442.

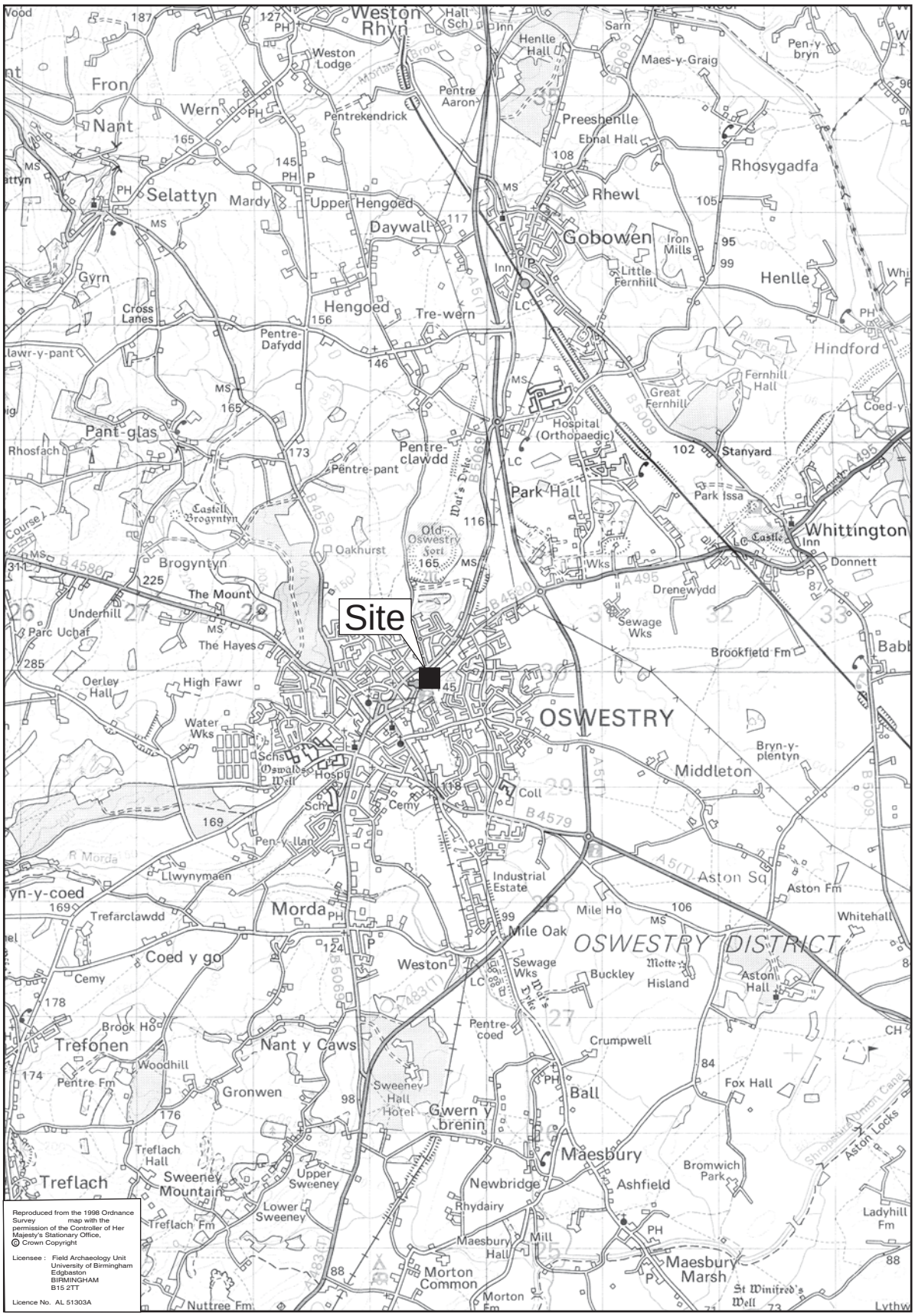
Site
OSWESTRY
OSWESTRY DISTRICT
Weston Rhyn
Fron
Nant
Wern
Selattyn
Mardy
Upper Hengoed
Daywall
Gobowen
Rhewl
Rhosygadfa
Preeshenlle
Ebnal Hall
Henlle
Hindford
Gyrn
Cross Lanes
Hengoed
Tre-wern
Pentre-Dafydd
Pant-glas
Rhosfach
Pentre-clawdd
Pentre-pant
Park Hall
Park Issa
Stanyard
Whittington
Castell Brogyntyn
Brogyntyn
The Mount
Underhill
Parc Uchaf
The Hayes
Oakhurst
Old Oswestry
Drenewydd
Donnett
Brookfield Fm
Oerley Hall
High Fawr
Water Wks
Middleton
Bryn-y-plentyn
Industrial Estate
Aston Sq
Aston Fm
Whitehall
Llwynymaen
Morda
Trefarclawdd
Coed y go
Mile Oak
Mile Ho
Buckley Hisland
Aston Hall
Weston
Sewage Wks
Pen-y-llan
Trefonen
Brook Ho
Nant y Caws
Woodhill
Pentre Fm
Gronwen
Sweeney Hall Hotel
Gwern y brenin
Pentre-coed
Crumpwell
Ball
Fox Hall
Maesbury
Bromwich Park
Ashfield
Newbridge
Rhydairy
Treflach
Treflach Hall
Sweeney Mountain
Upper Sweeney
Lower Sweeney
Treflach Fm
Maesbury Hall
Mill
Maesbury Marsh
Morton Common
Morton Fm
Nuttree Fm
St Winifred's Well
Aston Locks
Ladyhill Fm
Reproduced from the 1998 Ordnance Survey map with the permission of the Controller of Her Majesty's Stationary Office, © Crown Copyright
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Fig.1

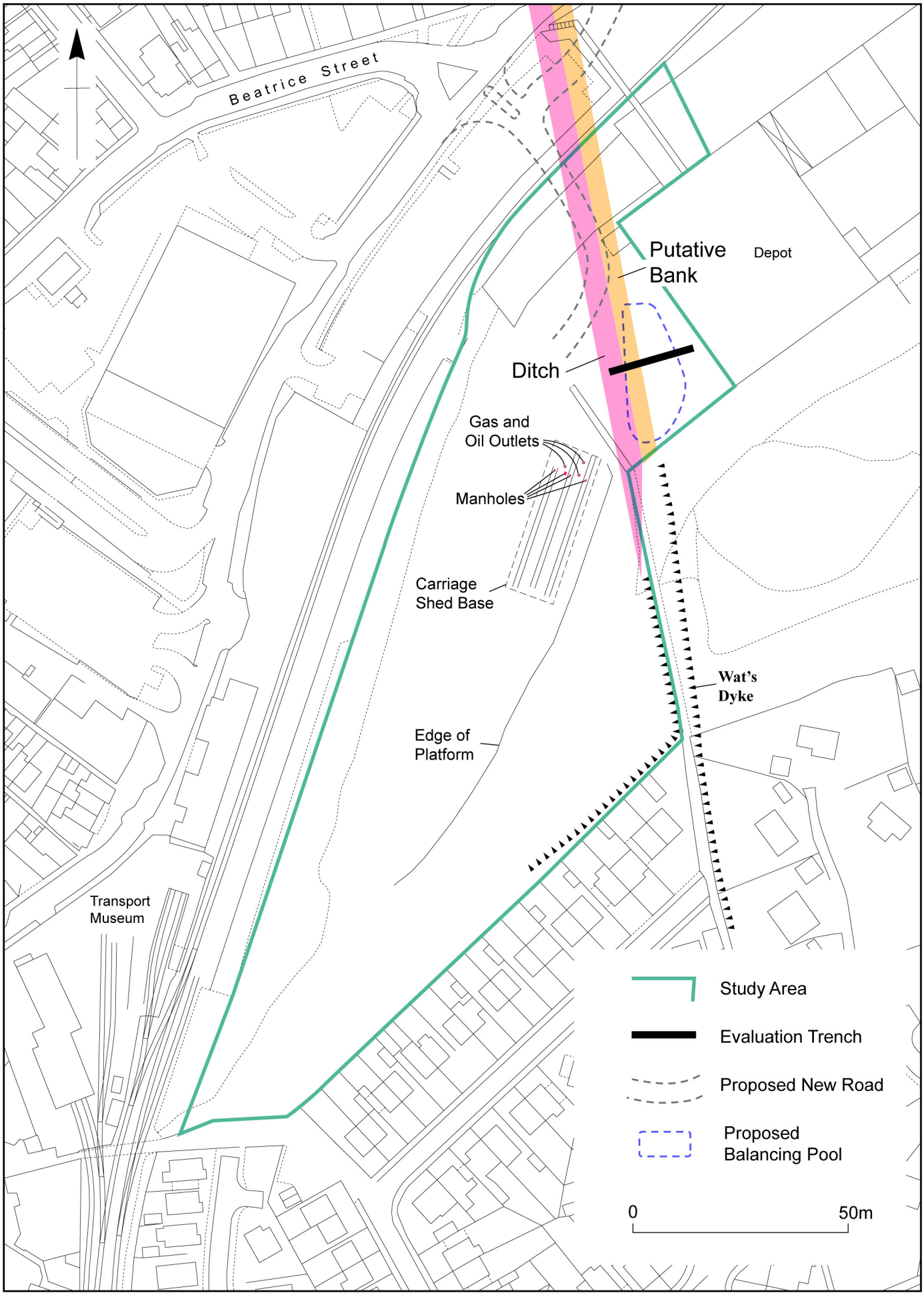
Beatrice Street
Putative Bank
Depot
Ditch
Gas and Oil Outlets
Manholes
Carriage Shed Base
Wat's Dyke
Edge of Platform
Transport Museum
Study Area
Evaluation Trench
Proposed New Road
Proposed Balancing Pool
0
50m

Fig.2

Plate 1

Plate 2

Plate 3

Plate 4

Plate 5

Plate 6

Plate 7

Plate 8

Plate 9

Plate 10

Plate 11

Plate 12

Plate 13

Plate 14

WRITTEN SCHEME OF INVESTIGATION FOR ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF
FORMER CARRIAGE SHED, CAMBRIAN RAILWAY LANDS, OSWALD ROAD, OSWESTRY

1.0: PLANNING BACKGROUND

A watching brief will be maintained during groundworks in the area of a former carriage shed.

2.0: LOCATION

The carriage shed is located to the east of the railway line, and to the west of the former line of Wat's Dyke. The NGR centre of the Cambrian Railways land is SJ 2952/3002).

3.0: ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

A walkover survey was undertaken in the area of the former carriage shed during an archaeological evaluation. The concrete hardstanding for the shed was the only surviving part of the building. At the northern end of the building were three sets of tracks. Remains of the drainage system for the shed were also observed.

4.0: SPECIFIC REQUIREMENTS

The watching brief is to be maintained within the area of the former carriage shed only. Finds will be retrieved by context, along with any fittings, for possible future display.

5.0: STAFFING

The project manager will be Laurence Jones and the watching brief will be maintained by an experienced archaeologist.

A: AIMS

The general aims of an archaeological watching brief is to identify and record archaeological features and deposits uncovered during hand-cleaning of excavations in advance of construction or infrastructure projects, and to prepare a brief report summarising the findings.

B: METHODOLOGY

An experienced archaeologist will attend site to monitor construction groundworks, as required above.

Groundworks to be observed will include the stripping of topsoil, B-horizon subsoils, and trenches cut into the natural subsoil.

Following the stripping of topsoil the machined surface will be inspected, and sufficient hand-cleaning will be undertaken to facilitate the definition of archaeological, or possible archaeological features and deposits.

Where it is safe to do so, the archaeologist will enter construction trenches for the purpose of undertaking hand-cleaning of the trench sides and base for the better definition of any archaeological features or deposits present. No excavation of archaeological features, other than hand-cleaning, would be undertaken. Where it is unsafe to enter deep trenches archaeological recording will be confined to photography and the completion of pre-printed pro-formas.

Should significant, or potentially significant groups of archaeological features be uncovered the Planning Archaeologist and Archaeological Consultant (if any) will be consulted immediately so that an alternative strategy for more detailed investigation can be devised, in consultation with the developer.

Human remains

No excavation of human remains would be undertaken until a Home Office Licence was obtained, and the Planning Archaeologist, the local Coroner, the Police, the Archaeological Consultant (if any) consulted.

Recording

Recording would be by means of pre-printed pro-formas for contexts and features, supplemented by plans (1:20 and 1:50 as appropriate) and sections (1:10 and 1:20 as appropriate), and 35mm monochrome print and colour slide photography.

Finds

Finds would be recovered by context would be washed, marked and bagged. Appropriate conservation work would be undertaken. A metal detector would be used as an aid to finds recovery.

Environmental sampling

All datable features would be sampled objectively for the recovery of charred or waterlogged plant remains, pollen and insect remains.

C: REPORT FORMAT

The archaeological watching brief report will comprise:

- Description of the development and archaeological background
- Details of the archaeological results, set within their context.
- Spot-dating of datable finds, and brief finds and environmental reports
- A discussion of the watching brief results.
- Plans showing the locations and extent of the development site subjected to the watching brief, supported by historic map extracts to place the watching brief results in the wider context.
- Simplified feature plans and sections, where applicable.
- A selection of colour photographs, where applicable.

D: PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS

- Birmingham Archaeology is a Registered Archaeological Organisation (RAO) with the Institute of Field Archaeologists (IFA)
- All Birmingham Archaeology staff will follow the Code of Conduct of the IFA at all times.
- The watching brief will be undertaken in accordance with the standards laid down in the 'Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Watching Briefs' (1999)
- The archaeological watching brief will follow the specific guidelines and requirements laid down in the Design Brief prepared by the relevant Planning Archaeologist, and the particular requirements set down in this document, which will be followed by all project staff. All variations will be agreed in advance with the relevant Planning Archaeologist and Archaeological Consultant (as appropriate).

E: HEALTH AND SAFETY

- A Risk Assessment will be undertaken before commencement of the archaeological watching brief.
- Birmingham Archaeology staff will follow the Health and safety guidelines contained in the Birmingham Archaeology Health and Safety Manual. This follows the requirements of the SCAUM Health and Safety Manual, and is approved by the Health and Safety Unit of the University of Birmingham.

F: PROGRAMME

The watching brief programme will follow that of the general contractor undertaking construction groundworks, with regular liaison between Birmingham Archaeology and the general contractor to ensure that regular archaeological attendance is maintained during the groundworks sufficient to ensure that the requirements of the Design Brief are fulfilled.

A suitable time allowance for hand-cleaning and recording of archaeological features and deposits should be made by the developer and their construction groundworkers. The archaeologist undertaking the watching brief will maintain regular liaison with the site manager/foreman to keep disruption of the construction programme to a minimum.