

# birmingham archaeology



UNIVERSITY OF  
BIRMINGHAM

**SITE 5, WARWICK  
STREET, BIRMINGHAM**

**AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL  
EVALUATION 2007**

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Supervisor.....BB..... date.....12/6/2007

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**SITE 5 WARWICK STREET, BIRMINGHAM  
AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION 2007**

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Birmingham CC Design Brief

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## **SUMMARY**

An archaeological evaluation was undertaken at Site 5, Warwick Street, Birmingham (centred on NGR SP 08098614) in June 2007. The fieldwork was carried out by Birmingham Archaeology on instruction from S and K Properties, with advice from Waterman CPM Environmental Planning and Design. The evaluation followed the completion of a desk-based assessment.

A total of three trenches were excavated. No evidence of medieval or early post-medieval deposits or structures was recorded. The natural subsoil was truncated by brick buildings recorded on the OS map dated 1888. One range of buildings formed part of a cellared brick-built tenement block. Trenches 2 and 3 recorded further brick-built buildings, also recorded on the same map.

## **SITE 5, WARWICK STREET, BIRMINGHAM AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION 2007**

### **1 INTRODUCTION**

#### **1.1 Background**

An archaeological evaluation was undertaken at Site 5, Warwick Street, Birmingham (centred on NGR SP 08098614) in June 2007. The fieldwork was undertaken by Birmingham Archaeology on instruction from S and K Properties, with advice from Waterman CPM Environmental Planning and Design. The evaluation followed the completion of a desk-based assessment. The desk-based assessment and evaluation were undertaken in advance of development proposals.

This report outlines the results of a field evaluation which has been undertaken following the Institute of Field Archaeologists Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Evaluations (IFA 2001). A desk-based assessment of the site has also been prepared (Waterman CPM 2007a). The evaluation conformed to a brief produced by Birmingham City Council (reproduced as Appendix 1), a Written Scheme of Investigation prepared by Waterman CPM (Waterman CPM 2007b), and a Method Statement (Birmingham Archaeology 2007) which was approved by the Local Planning Authority prior to implementation. The fieldwork was undertaken in accordance with Planning Policy Guidance Note 16 (PPG16; DoE 1990), policy 8.36 of the Birmingham Unitary Development Plan, and the City Council's Archaeology Strategy, which has been adopted as Supplementary Planning Guidance.

#### **1.2 Location**

The site is located on the northeastern side of Warwick Street, Birmingham, adjoining Number 79 (Figs. 1-2). At the time of the evaluation the site comprised a tarmac surface car park. The site forms an approximately level plateau. The land to the northeast, towards Bordesley High Street has been terraced into the natural, northeast-facing slope.

### **2 ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND**

Details of the archaeological background are provided in the desk-based assessment (Waterman CPM 2007), and will not be repeated here.

Briefly, the site is located within, or on the edge of the medieval settlement of Bordesley. The site is located on the edge of the settled area, as mapped in the mid 18th century, which may represent a contraction from the medieval settlement plan. Fieldwork on the northeastern frontage of Bordesley High Street has identified evidence for 17th and 18th century activity, including small-scale industry and the extraction of clay.

### 3 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

The principle aim of the evaluation was to determine the character, state of preservation and the potential significance of any buried remains.

More specific aims were to:

- Assess the survival of domestic dwellings, and industrial activity from the medieval period to the 20th century, as represented by structural and artifactual evidence.
- Assess the survival of evidence of past environmental conditions.
- Assess the potential of the site to contribute towards an appreciation of the historic development of this part of Birmingham.

### 4 METHODOLOGY

A total of three trenches, each measuring 20m by 1.6m were excavated, in accordance with a layout specified by the Planning Archaeologist, Birmingham City Council. The trenches were located to test the proposed development area as widely as possible.

All topsoil and modern overburden was removed using a JCB excavator with a toothless ditching bucket working under direct archaeological supervision, down to the top of the uppermost archaeological horizon or the subsoil (Plate 1). Because of the depth of the overburden it was not possible for reasons of health and safety to enter the trenches for the purpose of hand-cleaning.

All stratigraphic sequences were recorded, even where no archaeology was present. Plans and sections were drawn at scales of 1:50 and 1:20, as appropriate. 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 monochrome and colour print and colour slide photography.

No deposits were encountered which were appropriate for sampling for environmental remains. Treatment of all finds will conform to the guidance contained within 'A Strategy for the Care and Investigation of Finds' published by English Heritage.

The full site archive includes all finds recovered. 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 Birmingham City Museum and Art Gallery, subject to permission from the landowner.

## **5 RESULTS (FIGS. 2-3)**

The trenches are described individually in numerical order.

### **5.1 Trench 1 (Fig. 4, Plates 2-3)**

Trench 1 measured 20m in length and 2m in width, and was aligned northeast-southwest. Towards the northeastern end of the trench a floor surface (1006) was exposed at a depth of 1.88m below the level of the modern ground surface. The floor surface was made up of orange bricks and was also uncovered at the same depth in two machine-excavated sondages along the remainder of the trench. A brick wall (1002) ran parallel to the southeastern edge of the trench and was laid in English Garden wall bond. The brick floor surface (1006) formed part of cellar, also represented by a series of brick walls and archways, which were visible in the northeastern facing section of the trench. A substantial brick wall (1003) measuring 1.35m wide was exposed towards the northeastern end of the trench and was laid in raking stretcher bond bricks. It formed the support for archways 1004 and 1005, part of a series of walls and arches (1007-1012) within the cellar structure. The remains of a possible coal chute (1007 and 1011) were also partially exposed. The cellar had been backfilled with a mixture of ash, clinker and building demolition material (1001) which measured 1.60m in depth and was overlain by the modern concrete surface (1000), measuring 0.28m in depth. The natural subsoil was not recorded in this trench.

### **5.2 Trench 2 (Fig. 5, Plates 4-5)**

Trench 2 measured 20m in length and 2m in width, and was aligned northeast-southwest. The natural reddish-orange clay subsoil (2003) was recorded at a depth of 1.88m below the modern ground surface (2000). Along part of the southeastern edge of the trench the natural clay had been cut by a foundation trench (2008) associated with a brick wall (2006) which extended along part of the southeastern edge of the trench. The wall comprised a minimum of twelve courses of red bricks. Three brick-built buttresses (2005, 2006 and 2010) were subsequently added to the wall, each cut through the foundation trench, and into the subsoil.

The subsoil, and the backfilled foundation trench (2008) were overlain by a buried soil layer (2012) comprised of mid brown sandy silt-clay and measuring 0.40-0.50m in depth. It had been sealed by a brown silt-clay levelling layer (2002) which measured 0.65-0.75m in depth. The layer had in turn been overlain by a layer of ash and brick (2001), measuring 0.28m in depth which was sealed by the modern concrete ground surface (2000).

### **5.3 Trench 3 (Fig. 6)**

Trench 3 measured 20m in length and 2m in width, and was aligned northwest-southeast. The natural reddish-orange clay (3011) was exposed at a depth of 1.85m below the modern surface. At the southeastern end of the trench the subsoil had been truncated by a building, represented by a brick wall cut at a right-angle to the trench (3004), and an associated brick floor surface (3007), recorded at a depth of 2.25m below the modern surface. Towards the centre of the trench the subsoil had been overlain by a layer of redeposited clay (3002) which was cut by a service trench (3005). Towards the northwestern end of the trench a possible brick cellar floor (3010) was recorded at a depth of 2.10m. The floor was overlain by a layer of brick demolition rubble (3009). In turn this was overlain by a collapsed wall (3012). Layer

3002 was sealed by a deposit containing ash, charcoal and brick fragments (3001). This was cut by a further brick wall (3008). Above layer 3001 and the demolished remains of walls 3004 and 3008, was the modern concrete surface (3000).

## **6 THE FINDS**

Spot-dates by Stephanie Ratkai

Trench 2 (2012)

1x pearlware, 19th century  
1x industrial slipware, early 19th century  
2x creamware, early 19th century

The layer also contained a number of shell fragments.

## **7 DISCUSSION**

No features or deposits of medieval, or possible medieval date were recorded during the trial-trenching, and no finds of medieval, or possible medieval date were recovered. Any features or deposits of medieval date could have been scoured-out by 19th century development. 19th century cellars were recorded in Trenches 1 and 3. In Trench 2 the natural subsoil was recorded at a depth of 1.88m below the modern ground surface, a similar depth to the cellar floors recorded in the adjoining Trench 1.

Maps of 1760 and 1778 show that the site was not developed, although the more detailed map of 1778 indicates that the site and its immediate surrounds had been divided into regular plots adjoining the Warwick Street frontage. Again, the area appears undeveloped in the early 19th century (maps of 1828 and 1838). The Ordnance Survey First Edition map of 1888 (Fig. 3) shows a complex pattern of buildings within the site. These include two tenements laid out at a right-angle to the road frontage. The northwestern tenement was tested in Trench 1. These are separated by a small building of indeterminate function. Part of the northwestern outer wall of this building was identified in Trench 2. The structures identified within Trench 3 probably relate to the L-shaped building laid out along the northeastern street frontage, between the two tenement blocks. Map evidence suggests that the 19th century brick buildings on the site were cleared between 1918 and 1937.

## **8 ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

The project was commissioned by S and K Properties with advice from Waterman CPM Environmental Planning and Design. Thanks are due to Ian Travers of Waterman CPM for his assistance. The project was monitored by Mike Hodder on behalf of Birmingham City Council. The field team comprised Bob Burrows (Supervisor) and Liz Bishop. The illustrations were prepared by Nigel Dodds. The project was managed by Alex Jones for Birmingham Archaeology, who also edited this report.



## 9 REFERENCES

Birmingham Archaeology 2007 Method Statement for Archaeological Evaluation, Warwick Street, Birmingham.

Birmingham City Council 2006 Brief for Archaeological Desk-Based Assessment and Field Evaluation.

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

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Waterman CPM 2007a *Warwick Street, Birmingham, Archaeology Assessment*, unpublished client report.

Waterman CPM 2007b Site 5, *Warwick Street, Written Scheme of Investigation*.



Fig.1

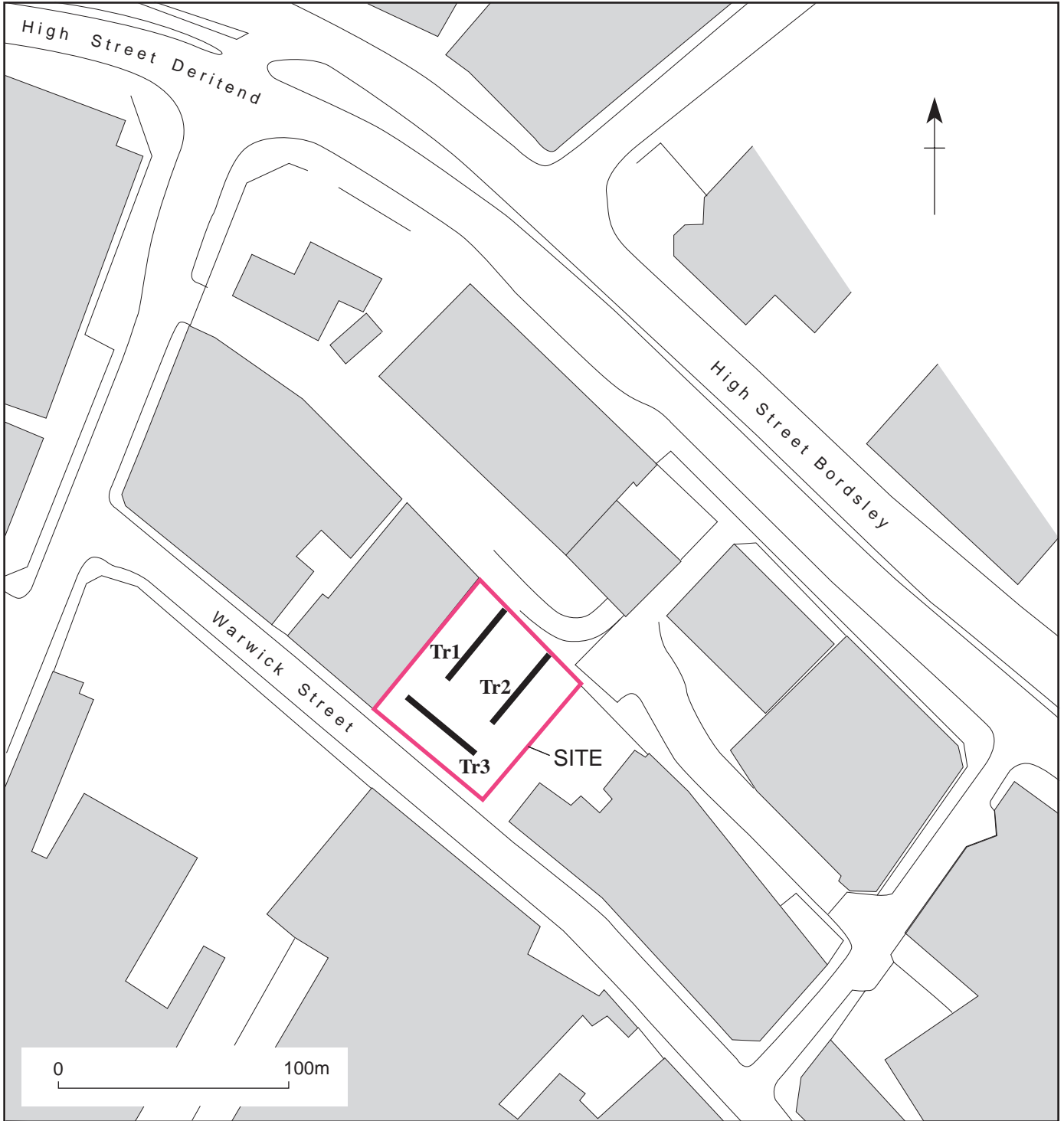


Fig.2

1888

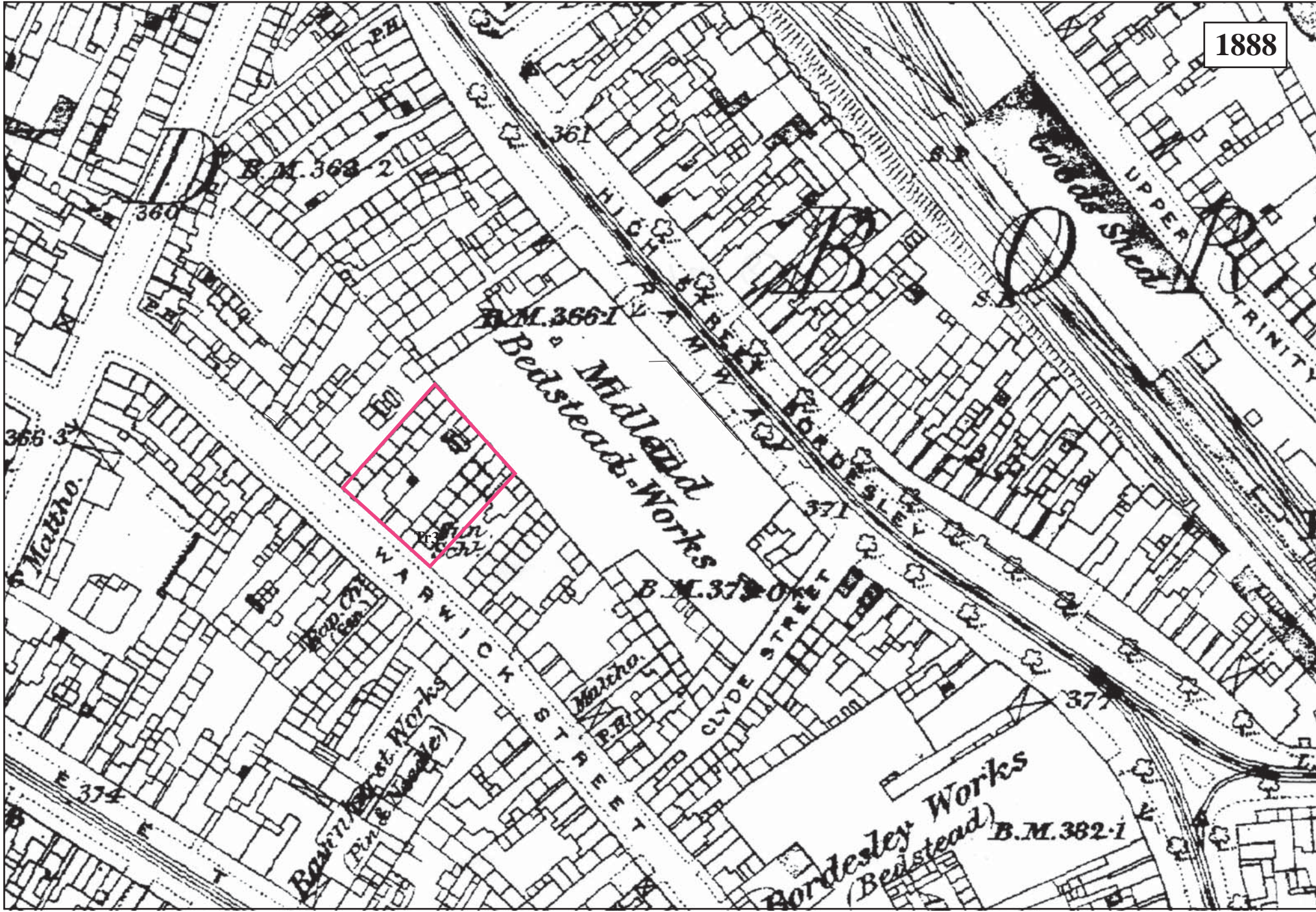


Fig.3

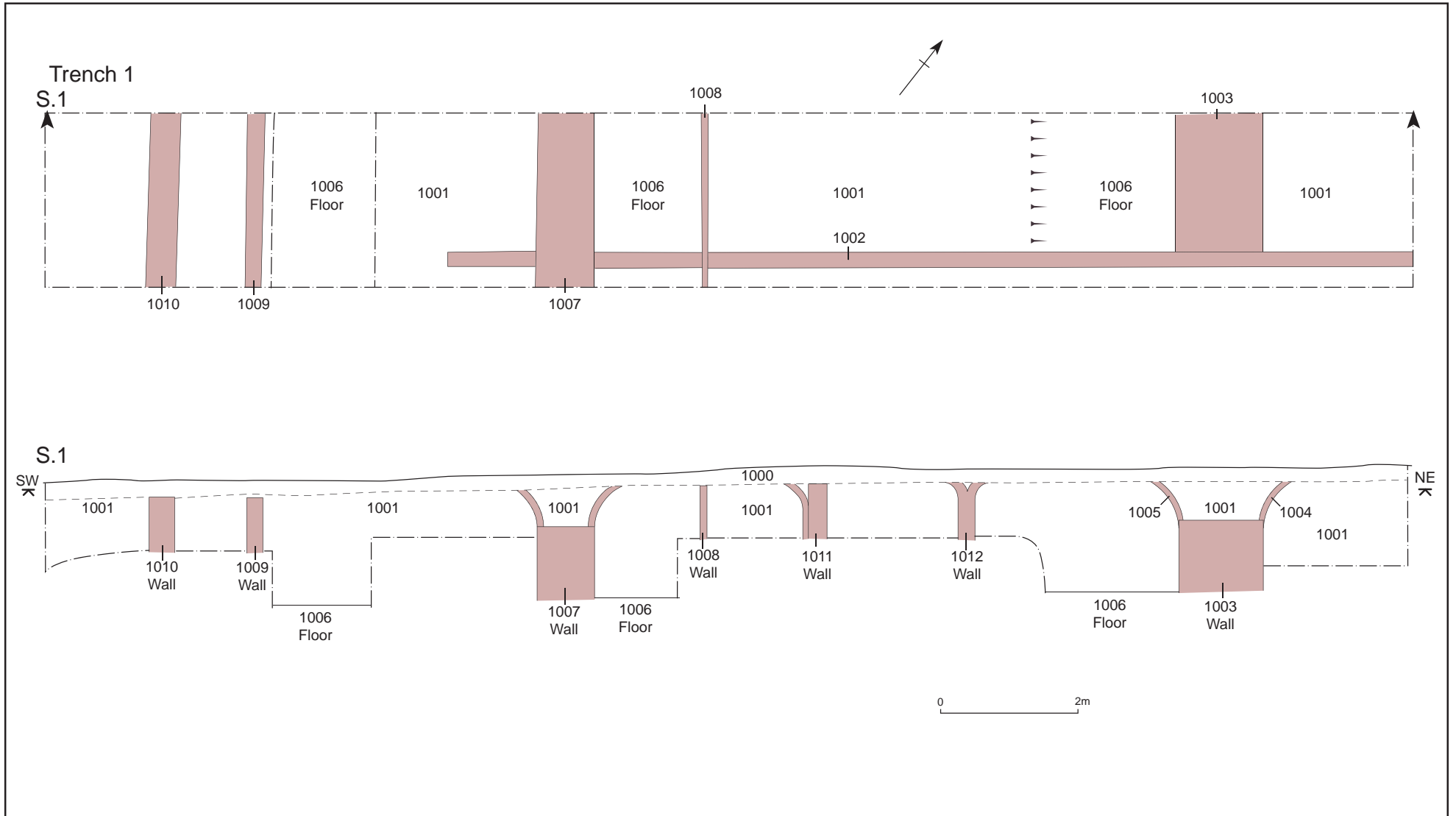


Fig.4

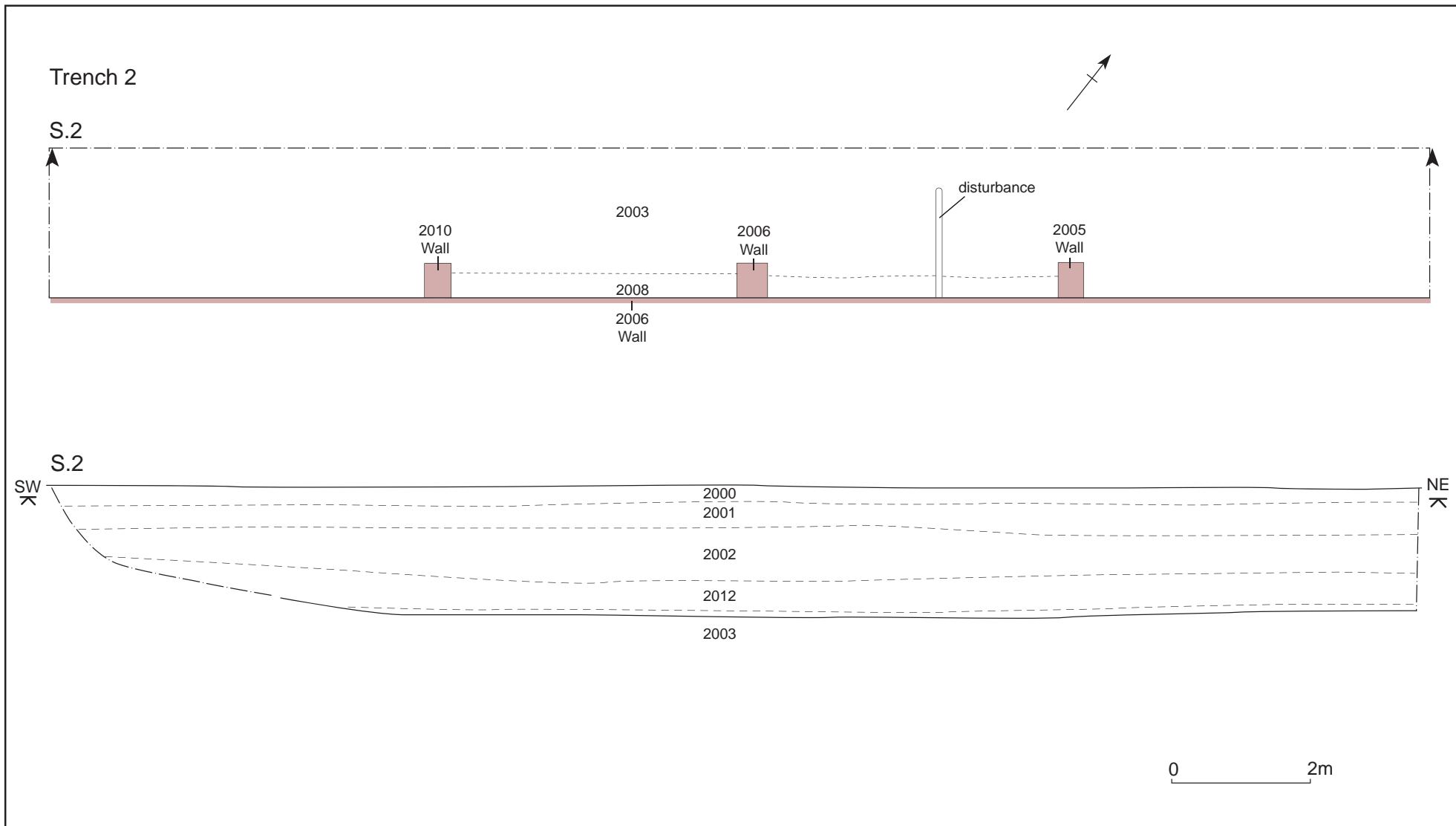


Fig.5

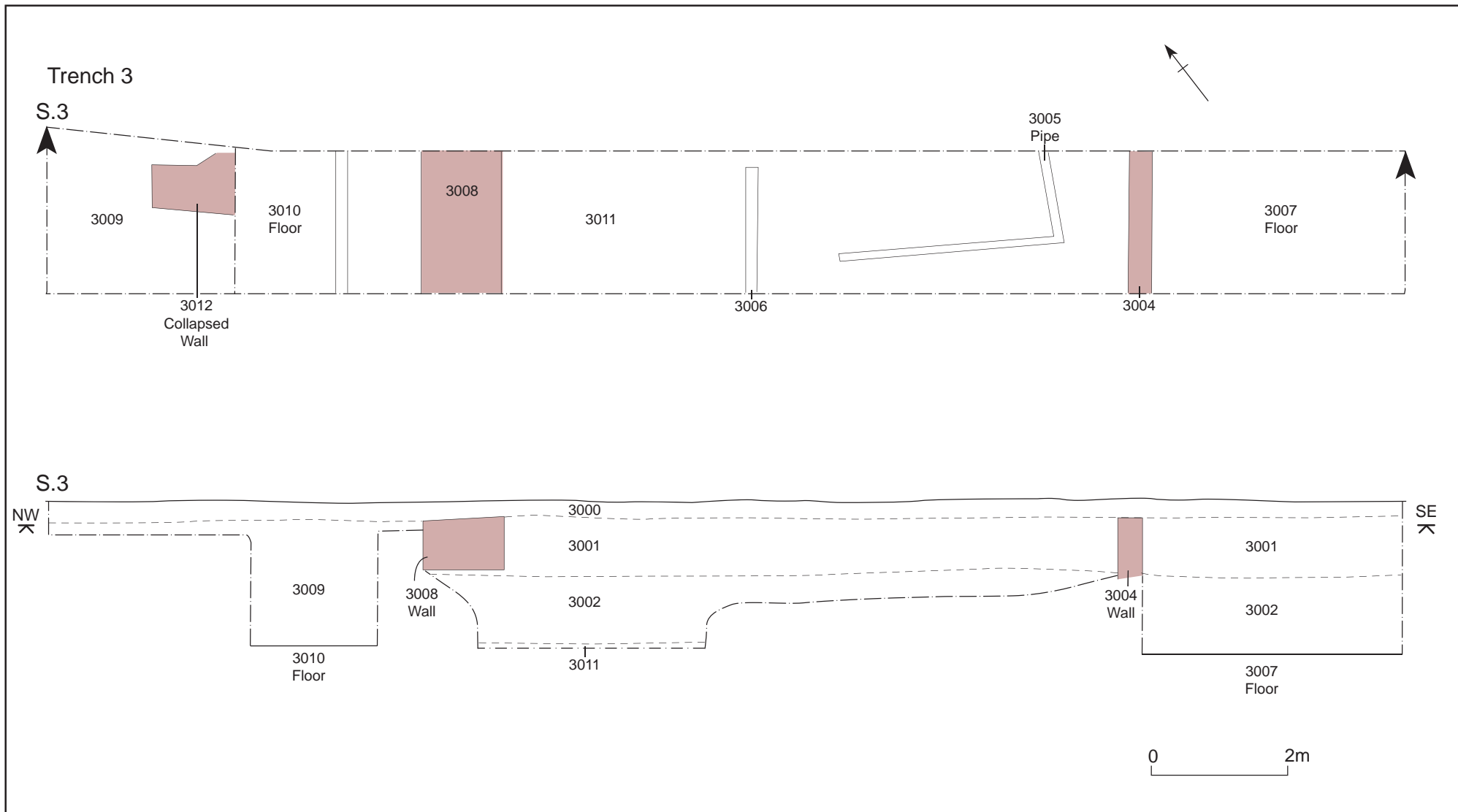


Fig.6



Plate 1



Plate 2





Plate 3



Plate 4



Plate 5