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170, High Street Deritend, Birmingham: Archaeological Evaluation 2004

by
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An Archaeological Evaluation of
170 High Street, Deritend, Birmingham

Summary

An archaeological evaluation was carried out in December 2003 by Birmingham Archaeology in advance of determination of an outline planning application to redevelop land at 170 High Street, Deritend, Birmingham City Centre (NGR SP 07808629). The work was commissioned by the developer, David Andrews, and was monitored by the City Council Planning Archaeologist, Dr Mike Hodder. A desk-based assessment identified the development site as being potentially of archaeological significance because of the possible survival of waterlogged deposits belonging to a former course of the River Rea, together with other riverside industrial features such as osier pits, flax-retting or leather curing tanks dating from the medieval period onwards.

Alluvial deposits were identified in two trenches at a height of approximately 100m A.O.D. some 3m beneath the modern ground surface. These belonged to an abandoned meander of the River Rea that went out of use when a new bridge was constructed in the later 18th century. While it was not possible to securely date these deposits because little artefactual evidence was recovered from the excavations, they were clearly 18th century or earlier, and several phases of deposition were noted in the alluvial build up. Towards the middle of the 170 High Street property natural sand and gravel subsoil was found at a height of 100.3m A.O.D. there was no alluvial cover and this indicates the southern limits of the former river channel. Within the former river channel the alluvial deposits had been truncated in places by cellars and foundation walls associated with a row of early 19th-century buildings called Bridge Row, that faced onto the new bridge. These buildings once housed a plethora of family-based businesses associated with the burgeoning Birmingham 'toy-trade', and included a tinplate works, a japanners, a stamping and piercing works and a saddlers, ironmongers and whipmakers. These industrial activities largely took place in the cluster of shoppings and outbuildings behind the High Street frontage, and where there was also some working class court housing. During the rest of the 19th and 20th centuries these businesses changed with the times, amalgamating, and becoming larger, more specialised operations, culminating in the complete colonisation of this area by Phosphor Bronze Foundry in the mid-20th century. The concrete foundations for this factory, part of which still stands to the west of 170 High Street, were cut through the demolition material and cellars of the earlier buildings. However, despite this large-scale disturbance over much of the site the evaluation demonstrated the survival of alluvial archaeological deposits and because of the potential significance of these deposits to shed light on the historical development of this important part of historic Birmingham further excavation is likely to be required if preservation in situ *through careful foundation design is not feasible.*

1.0 Introduction

This report describes the results of archaeological fieldwork undertaken at 170 High Street, Deritend, Birmingham City Centre (NGR SP 07208629, Fig. 1) in December 2003. The work was carried out by Birmingham Archaeology and commissioned by the developer David Andrews, to provide archaeological information as part of an outline planning application for the redevelopment of the site. An earlier desk-based assessment (Conway 2002) identified the development site as being part of a zone of potential archaeological survival, and that development of the site was likely to affect below-ground archaeological remains. In line with government guidance (Planning and Policy Guidence Note 16) and the City Council's planning policies (Policy 8.36 of the Birmingham Plan), there was a requirement, therefore, for an archaeological evaluation to establish the nature and extent of below-ground archaeological survival within the proposed area of development.

The archaeological evaluation was conducted in accordance with the Institute of Field Archaeologists Standard and Guidance for Field Evaluation (Institute of Field Archaeologists 1994), a brief prepared by Birmingham City Council (Hodder 2003) and a specification prepared by Birmingham Archaeology (Litherland 2003). The site archive is currently held at Birmingham Archaeology. It will be deposited with the Birmingham Museum within a reasonable time of the completion of the evaluation, subject to the approval of the landowner.

2.0 Location, Geology and Topography

The proposed development site is located in Birmingham City Centre, on the south side of Deritend High Street. The site is bounded by High Street, Deritend, to the north, Stone Yard to the east, and factory and warehouse buildings to the south and west. The site was formerly occupied by a petrol station and was flat, being situated on ground that had been made up over what was once the immediate floodplain of the River Rea. Here, the underlying geology consists of patches of sand and gravel and alluvium overlying Mercia Mudstone.

3.0 Archaeological Background

The northern part of the proposed development area was included in a general archaeological assessment of the Digbeth, Deritend and Bordesley carried out in 1995 for Birmingham City Council, and a detailed desk-based assessment was subsequently carried in 2002 in support of the current planning application. The conclusions of the detailed desk-based assessment were that despite disturbance by petrol tanks and later building activity there was potential for the survival of significant archaeological deposits here because the ground level had been raised by over 2m in the valley floor from the 19th century onwards. In particular there was potential for evidence of water-using industries from the medieval period onwards and waterlogged palaeo-environmental remains in the former channel of the River Rea. Furthermore, archaeological evidence from other excavations in Deritend has demonstrated that a broad range of archaeological deposits and features may be expected. Excavations at Floodgate Street in 2002 (Williams *et al.* 2002) found evidence of multi-phase

medieval occupation together with post-medieval industrial activity dating from the 15th to 18th centuries. Floodgate Street also yielded large quantities of preserved organic remains, in particular relating to tanning. Evidence of tanning was also located at Gibb Street on the north side of High Street, Deritend (Mould 2000), and evidence for local medieval pottery manufacture was also found nearby at the Old Crown (Mould *et al.* 1994).

4.0 Historical Background

This crossing point of the River Rea, that had probably been used since prehistoric times, was crucial to the development of the medieval town from the 12th century onwards. A meander in the ancient course of the river, as shown on the 18th-century mapping for example (Figs. 2 and 3), was probably caused by a gravel knoll that the river had to negotiate here, that made it wider and more readily fordable. The gravel knoll was supplemented by a causeway that carried the road over the wetter ground in Digbeth, meaning 'a pool farmed beside a causeway', according to Margaret Gelling, an expert in place-name studies. The causeway was later supplemented by a series of wooden and stone bridges over what used to be two channels of the River Rea, the other channel, which was blocked off in the late 17th century, running roughly where Milk Street is today. The crossing was continually up-graded, notably in the 18th century, when it is documented that it was rebuilt no less than three times probably as a result of the exponential take off in the trade of the town.

The place-name Deritend probably refers to the 'deer-gate-end' at the easternmost boundary of the Holme Park and the Little or Over Park, both belonging to the lord of the manor and located on either side of Digbeth High Street. The proposed development site lies on eastern side of the river beyond the pale, or boundary, of the Holme Park. Two nearby enclosures on this side of the river were described as the Great and the Little Buckstalls in the survey of the town made in 1553 and were probably used to pen deer away from the park. The built up area of the medieval suburb of Deritend probably did not extend sufficiently westwards to include 170, High Street, Deritend, which clearly lay in the floodplain of the River Rea. The boundary between the floodplain and higher, better-drained ground was probably somewhere between Stone Yard and Saint John's Chapel, built in 1381. Instead, comparison with other nearby excavations at Floodgate Street and Gibb Street and investigation of the 18th century mapping, suggest that the types of activity most likely to have taken place here would have included supplementary industrial activities, such as hemp or flax retting and leather curing, that utilised the plentiful water supply, but were not too prone to the occasional flood. Nearby topographic features indicative of this type of activity included two areas called 'Birchole' (later called Brickhill Road) and Vaughn's Hole' in the 18th century. This spread of industrial activity was typical of medieval town and these industries grew up in tandem with the better known metal-working trade into the post- medieval period. Nevertheless, they are crucial to our understanding of the gradual development of Birmingham into the city of a thousand trades and the workshop of the world by the early 19th century.

In 1788, amid new development of the land around Bradford Street and also in response to the arrival of the canals on Thomas Gooch's land to the north of High

Street, Digbeth, an act of parliament was obtained to widen and improve Deritend Bridge yet again. The rebuild took a number of years to complete and involved the straightening of the meander and the widening of the approaches to the bridge. By the Kempson Map of Birmingham surveyed in 1808 (not illustrated) a terrace of five buildings called Bridge Row had been built. These were set back from the street frontage, presumably to avoid the most substantial infill of the former river course that would not have provided good ground upon which to build.

By the mid-19th century the terrace was occupied by a number of family firms. These included the Deritend Bridge Works, a tinplate workers and japanners belonging to Charles Smith located next to the River Rea, and the Jennens button works situated just to the west of 170 High Street, Deritend. Within the proposed development area there was Tomlinson's stamping and piercing works; Cheston's, a saddlers, ironmongers and whipmakers; and, finally, an estate agent (Fig. 4). Cheston's of which an illustration of the main shop survives (Fig. 5), was probably typical of the buildings comprising the Bridge Row frontage and part of the cellars of this building were excavated in Trench 1. It was three storeys in height and three bays in width, the small glazing bars and overall style being typically early 19th-century in date. The first reference to the firm of Charles Cheston at Bridge Row was found in a Trade Directory of 1829, before this a firm called Thomas Cheston's, selling Soho Latchets, buckles, and spurs, was situated in 13 Jamaica Row close to the Bull Ring. Industrial activity would have been carried out in the shopping and outbuildings clustered behind the frontage and these were intermixed with some court housing accessed by a passage off Stone Yard (Fig. 6 and Plate 1). Much of the proposed development area was rebuilt between 1889 and 1905. These industrial premises were then replaced in the later 1940s by the steel-framed factory and offices of the Phosphor Bronze Foundry that closed in the 1970s (Plate 2), while the bombing of this area, including Saint John's Chapel allowed the High Street, Deritend to be widened into a dual carriageway upon which the former petrol station was situated.

5.0 Aims

The aims of the archaeological evaluation were to:

- establish the likely presence or absence of any archaeological deposits and features within the proposed development area
- define the nature, extent and significance of surviving deposits and features, and
- provide information to allow the formulation of a mitigation scheme for further excavation in advance of development, if appropriate

The evaluation paid particular attention to points i-iv set down in Section 5.0 of the Design Brief (Appendix 1), these being to assess:

- the survival of remains of industrial processes from the medieval period onwards
- the survival of remains of past environmental conditions and industrial residues, particularly in the former course of the River Rea
- whether the 18th century river channel was man-made, and
- the potential of the site to contribute to an understanding of the historic development of this part of Birmingham.

6.0 Method

Due to the considerable depth of the overburden encountered during the evaluation, which was in excess of three metres, and presence of numerous concrete foundations and older cellars only three trenches were excavated in total (Fig. 7). Trench 1 had to be enlarged to make it safely accessible for hand excavation by battering back all of the sides to an angle of 45 degrees and by the removal of unstable cellar walls. Because of these ground conditions Trenches 2 and 3 were subsequently opened for the purposes of observation from the side of the excavation.

Trench 1 measured approximately 14m by 8m, and was targeted to sample part of the meander of the River Rea. Trench 2 measured 8m by 2m, was located in the southern half of the site where it was considered possible archaeological deposits related to medieval and post-medieval industrial activity beyond the river channel might be present, while Trench 3 measuring 10m by 4m was targeted to further check the line of the former channel of the River Rea.

The layers of modern overburden were removed under archaeological supervision by a 360 degree tracked machine fitted with a toothless ditching bucket and breaker when necessary. Where possible, subsequent excavation of archaeological deposits was carried out by hand and all alluvial deposits were sampled. Recording was carried out using pre-printed *pro forma* record cards for contexts and features, supplemented by plans (at 1:20 and 1:50), sections (at 1:10 and 1:20), and monochrome print and colour slide photography in all trenches.

7.0 Results

Trench 1 (Fig. 8; Plate 3)

The River Phase

The natural sand and gravel subsoil (1035) lay at a depth of approximately 99.6m A.O.D or 3.5m below ground level. The natural subsoil shelved up slightly to the south and was overlain by a series of alluvial deposits. The earliest was a mid grey/brown silty clay (1030) with charcoal flecking and a lot of organic material, which was preserved to a depth of 0.5m in the northern end of the trench where it had not been cut away by later cellars. An environmental sample was taken of this deposit, which is reported on in Section 8.0, below. Overlying 1030 was a deposit of clinker and ash (1029) which was sealed by a dark brown/grey silty clay (1028) with charcoal flecking. The final deposit in the alluvial sequence was a mixed dark grey silty clay (1027) with gravel and mortar flecking.

The Bridge Row Cellars

A north-south aligned linear feature (F115) was cut through the sequence of alluvial deposits described above from the mixed layer (1027), which was a working surface. The cut was the construction trench for a frogless 2.5 inch thick red brick wall (F114) that formed the east wall of a cellar that was machined away over the rest of the trench in order to expose the alluvium. A series of tipped clean sandy and dirty ashy deposits 1019-1026 had been backfilled into cut F115 and banked up against the

eastern face of cellar wall F114. Towards the northern end of the trench layer 1019 was sealed by a dark grey/brown silty clay (1015), which contained rubble, while to the south 1019 was sealed by a dark grey brown silty clay (1018). Both deposits were overlain by a series of levelling deposits (1012, 1013 and 1014) with charcoal flecking that formed the base for a tile floor (1010) in the north end of the trench. Under the tile floor were two sub-oval pits probably associated with the construction of the building. The earliest, F112, which was cut from 1014 was only partially exposed in section and was filled with rubble and ash (1031) F112 was sealed by a deposit of mixed grey/brown silty clay (1013), and a thin black ash bed (1012) of the tile floor (1010). In turn 1012 was truncated by a U-shaped cut (F111), which contained rubble (1011). To the south another rubble-filled cut (F113) had been cut from 1013 and sealed by a yellow brown sand and rubble layer (1008). All of these deposits and features were associated with the construction and alteration of one of Bridge Row properties, which judging from the trench location was probably the former Cheston's shop. It may be tentatively suggested that cellar plan of the building consisted of a centrally located access (i.e. the tile floor 1010) leading to a set of cellars located in the outermost bays of the building, of which the western cellar was exposed in the excavations. The brick type and lime mortar mix were both consistent with a building constructed in the late 18th or early 19th century.

Later Buildings
Behind the western cellar wall of the 18th/19th century building described above was an engineering brick wall bonded with Portland cement that supported several large brick piers (Plate 4). This was part of the Stamping and Piercing Works that was rebuilt between 1889 and 1905. The tile floor (1010) and the rubble levelling layer (1008) were truncated by the concrete base (F110, 1034)) of a girder and other walls associated with the Phospher Bronze factory, built in the 1940s.

Trench 2 (observation only, Fig. 9)

The natural sand and gravel (2022)) was slightly higher in this trench lying at *c.*100m A.O.D. It was sealed by a layer of grey/black brown silty clay (2021). The red brick wall (F210), that was similar in appearance to the earlier cellar walls in Trench 1, was probably built from this horizon and a series of ash and rubble deposits (2017-2020) built up against it. Not much of walls F211 and F212 was visible within the trench, although the fact that they were built from a higher level than F210 suggests that they belonged to a later phase, possibly the documented rebuild that occurred between 1889 and 1905. These walls were subsequently demolished and a series of levelling deposits built up over them that formed the base of the 1940s factory floor.

Trench 3 (observation only, Fig. 10)

The natural sand and gravel in this trench (3028) lay at a depth of approximately 100m A.O.D. or 3m below ground level. It was sealed by a nearly 1m deep deposit of mid grey/brown silty clay (3027) with charcoal flecking and organic material throughout that was similar in appearance to the lower alluvial deposit (1030) in Trench 1. Cut into 3027 were a series of modern-looking brick and concrete walls (F310, F312 and F313) associated with the 1940s factory, and between these a seies of levelling deposits (3019, 3020, 3023 and 3025) had been dumped. The upper 0.5m of deposits were associated with the construction of petrol station forecourt.

8.0 Environmental Evidence *by James Greig (Archaeobotanical Consultant)*

The Samples and Laboratory Work

The main part of the organic material (context 1030) was sampled in two 25cm monolith tins, and as separate 5cm samples covering the 12cm of organic material above this. This allowed any changes in the deposit to be discovered. A larger bulk sample of this context (1030) was also collected from the lowest sediment for macrofossils such as seeds. Two batches of $50cm^3$ were measured out from the bulk material and dispersed in water. The organic content was separated by washing over from one container to another, and sieved on a 0.5mm mesh to remove fine material. The material was sorted under a binocular microscope and the identifiable remains extracted and identified with the aid of the writer's reference collection of seeds. There was quite a good collection of seeds present, and also beetle remains, twigs, leaf remains, charcoal, coal, and animal hair.

Results

The plant remains are listed below with names and order according to Stace (1991); the small samples examined are sufficient to tell the basic outlines and potential of the material. The most interesting feature of the finds is the presence of flax capsule fragments and seed. This suggests that flax, which would probably have been grown in fields elsewhere, had been processed on the site. Flax was first soaked in water or retted, so that the fibre could then be separated from the rest of the material by a laborious series of processes such as heckling and scutching. As this deposit is a channel, it was possibly used for retting the hemp, although other waste could have been deposited there, such as the chaff from removing the linseed from the ripe heads. Linseed oil is pressed from the seeds, and it has many traditional uses such as for making paint. This would fit in with other evidence of industry from Birmingham. The other remains include sedges, rushes and water plantain which might be the natural vegetation of a watercourse or ditch, and a few weeds such as buttercups and docks, which might occur almost anywhere. The presence of coal and charcoal suggests general activity and waste, and animal hair could represent skin processing for leather.

Seed List

Plant	***number***	
Ranunculus acris/repens/bulbosus	4	buttercups
Rumex acetosella	1	
Rumex sp	1	
Rosa/Rubus thorn	1	rose or bramble
Linum usitatissimum (capsule fragments)	12	flax
Linum usitatissimum (seed)	1	linseed
? *Myosotis* sp.	1	? forget-me-not
cf. *Leontodon autumnalis*	1	
Alisma sp.	2	water-plantain
Juncus sp	2	rush
Carex spp	27	sedges
? Cerealia	1	? charred grain

Conclusions
The plant remains include remains of flax, suggesting that it was processed in the vicinity. The organic remains were well preserved, so if further work was needed on seeds, pollen and beetles, it would probably be productive.

9.0 Discussion and Implications

The evaluation succeeded in demonstrating that despite extensive 19th and 20th century building activity alluvial deposits of the River Rea are preserved under the northern frontage of the development area. The limits of the former river channel can also be mapped more accurately now, and whilst broadly conforming to the shape of the meander first depicted on Westley's Map of 1731 the river course was clearly once more extensive than his map shows, particularly regarding its southernmost extent. This may make the 'pool' here, implied in the place name evidence for Digbeth, a much more substantial landscape feature and one far less likely to be confused with a simple meander of the river. However, because it is likely that the alluvial deposits found in Trench 1 and Trench 3 were located beyond the southern bank of the River Rea as depicted in the 18th-century mapping it was not possible to check if this channel was natural or man-made, but no evidence of a wooden revetment or pallisade was found and so it is likely that this older channel at least was a natural channel. On balance, despite the lack of secure artefactual dating evidence, it seems clear that the alluvial deposits found in Trench 1 and Trench 3 are highly likely to be pre-18th-century in date. However, it is also possible that the alluvium may have been deposited by flash floods that were a documented post-medieval phenomena here, rather than being actually located within an earlier and larger channel of the River Rea. This may explain the failure to locate industrial features cut into the natural sands and gravels if this area was clearly very prone to flooding, although the actual sample of this subsoil surface was limited due to the difficult conditions of the excavation. Furthermore, the environmental evidence strongly suggests that flax processing was taking place in the vicinity and that this alluvial deposition was taking place in a generally industrialised rather than a rural setting.

In summary:

1. Significant alluvial deposits survived along the front part of the proposed development site.
2. These deposits are likely to be pre-18th-century in date.
3. The environmental potential of these deposits is good.

It may be provisionally envisaged that should the foundation design for the proposed development impact unduly upon the alluvial deposits, then mitigation in the form of further excavation is likely to be required by the local planning authority. An alternative to this would be to design the foundations in such a way that it could be demonstrated that the alluvial deposits would not be affected by the proposed scheme. Solutions might include raft-foundation designs or limited piling within the footprint of the evaluation trenches, canter-levering out of the first and subsequent storeys of the new building, or provision of some form of soft landscaping or parking in this area.

10.0 Acknowledgements

The field work was commissioned by David Andrews of Andrews Construction to whom thanks are due for the help and co-operation of himself and his family. The evaluation was supervised by Helen Martin with the assistance of Chris Hewitson and Darminda Chuhan. This report was written by Helen Martin and edited by Steve Litherland who also managed the project on behalf of Birmingham Archaeology. The illustrations were prepared by Nigel Dodds. Thanks are due to Dr. Mike Hodder, Planning Archaeologist, who monitored the site on behalf of Birmingham City Council.

11.0 References

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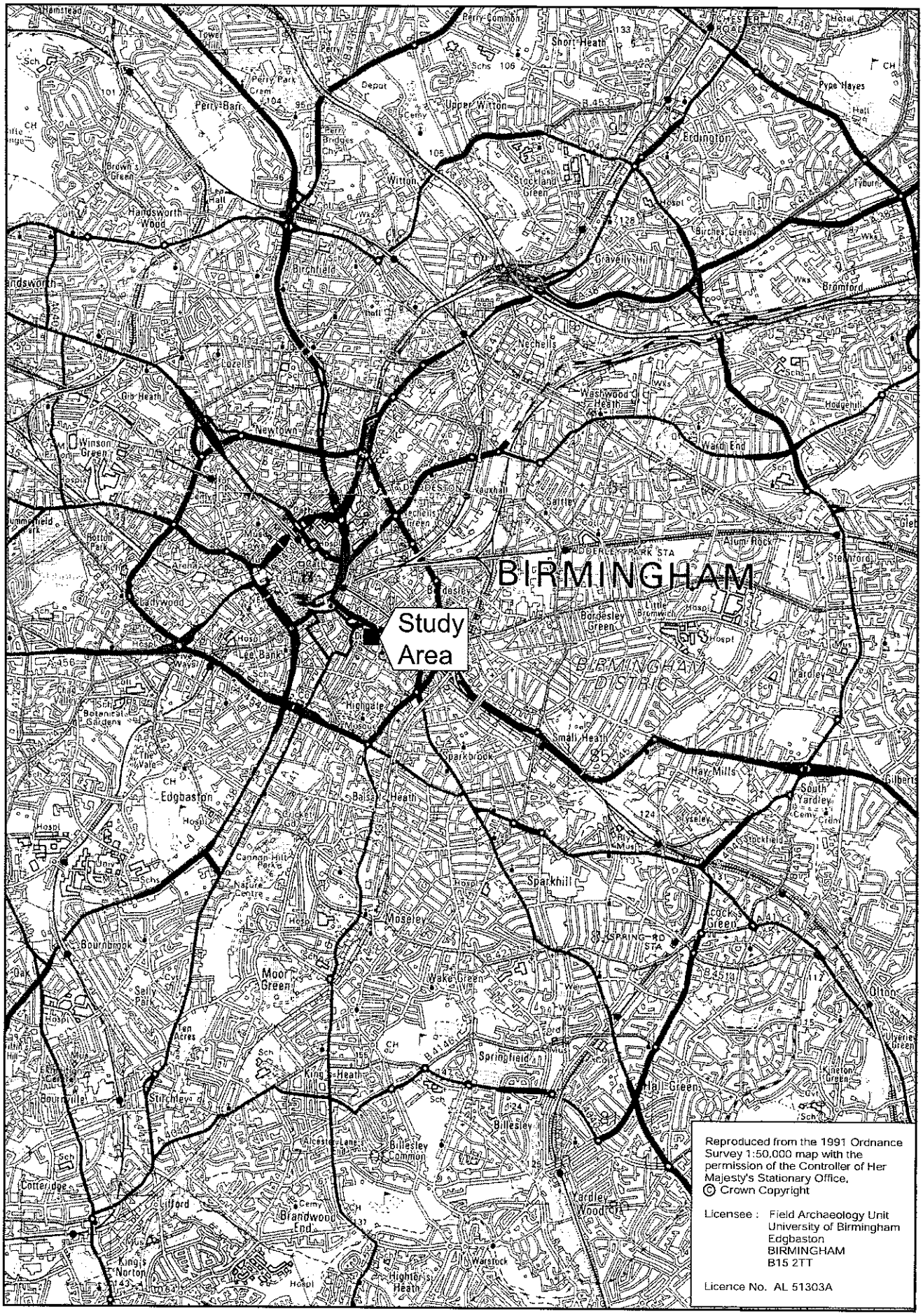
BIRMINGHAM
Study Area
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Edgbaston
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Fig.1

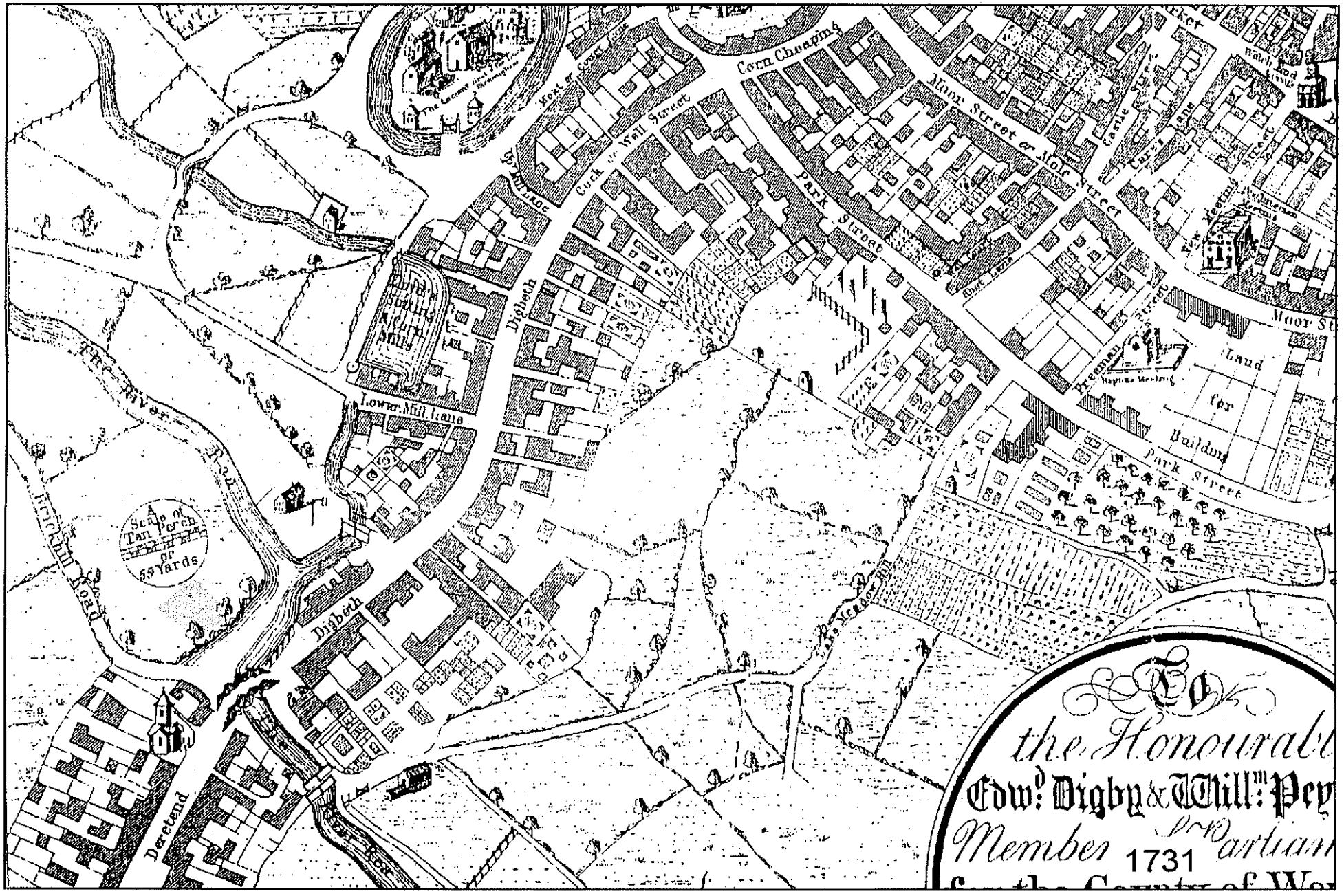

Corn Changes
Moor Street
Park Street
Digbeth
Lower Mill Lane
Land for Building
Park Street
Scale of Tan Perch or 55 Yards
Deritend
To the Honourable
Edwd Digby & Willm Pey
Member
1731

Fig.2

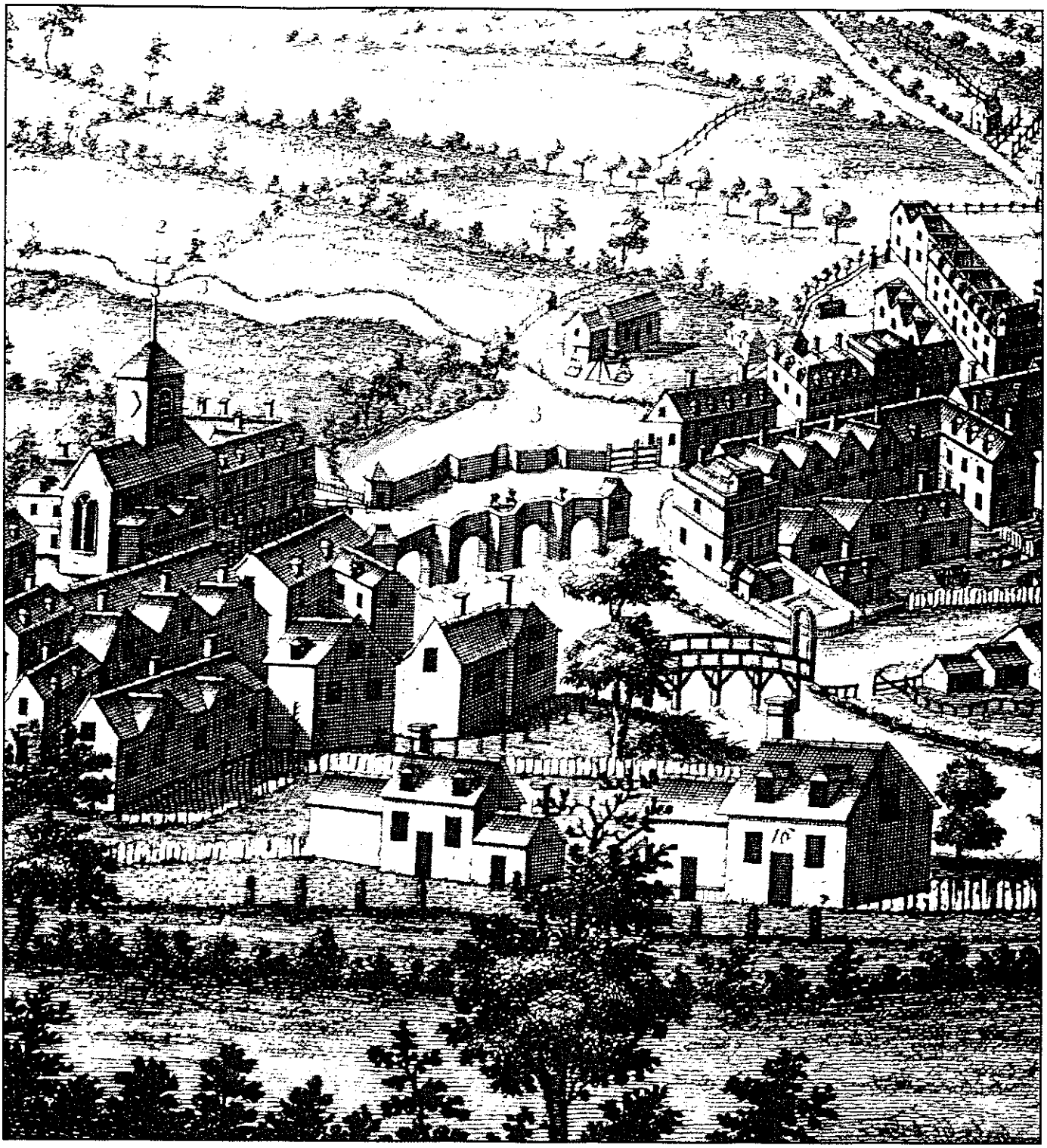


Fig.3

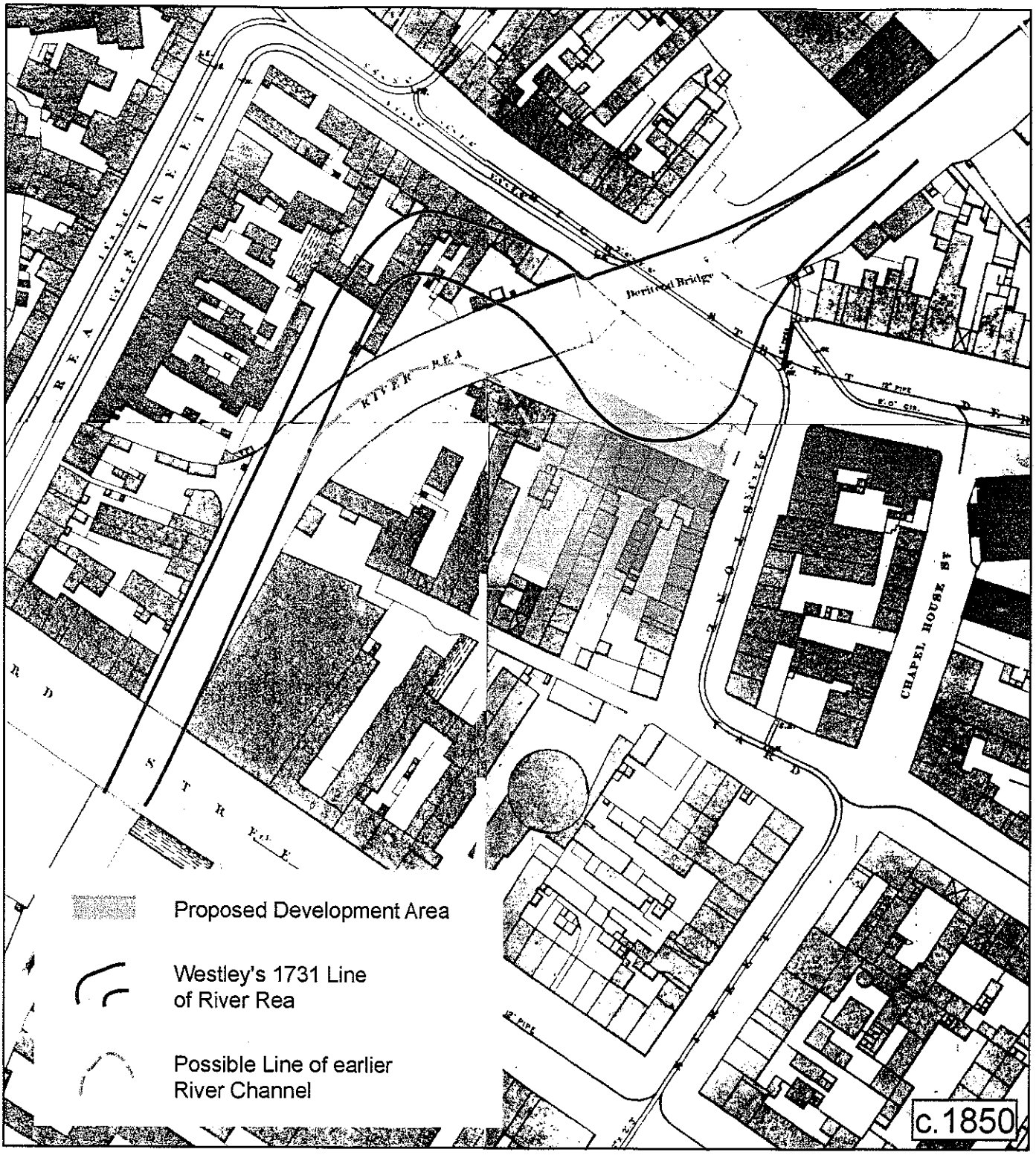
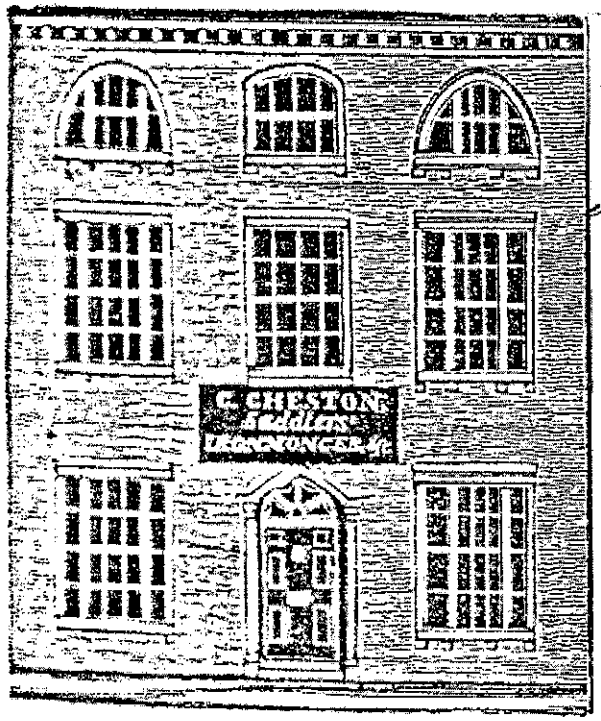

Proposed Development Area
Westley's 1731 Line of River Rea
Possible Line of earlier River Channel
c.1850

Fig.4

F.571.70



Half Price allowed for Returned Packages.

Bridge Row, Deritend, BIRMINGHAM.

Mr Middlemore

Bought of **CHARLES CHESTON.**

Saddlers' Ironmongery in all its Branches.

HARNESS, SADDLES, WHIPS, &c. &c. ON THE BEST TERMS.

Military Equipments.

Fig.5

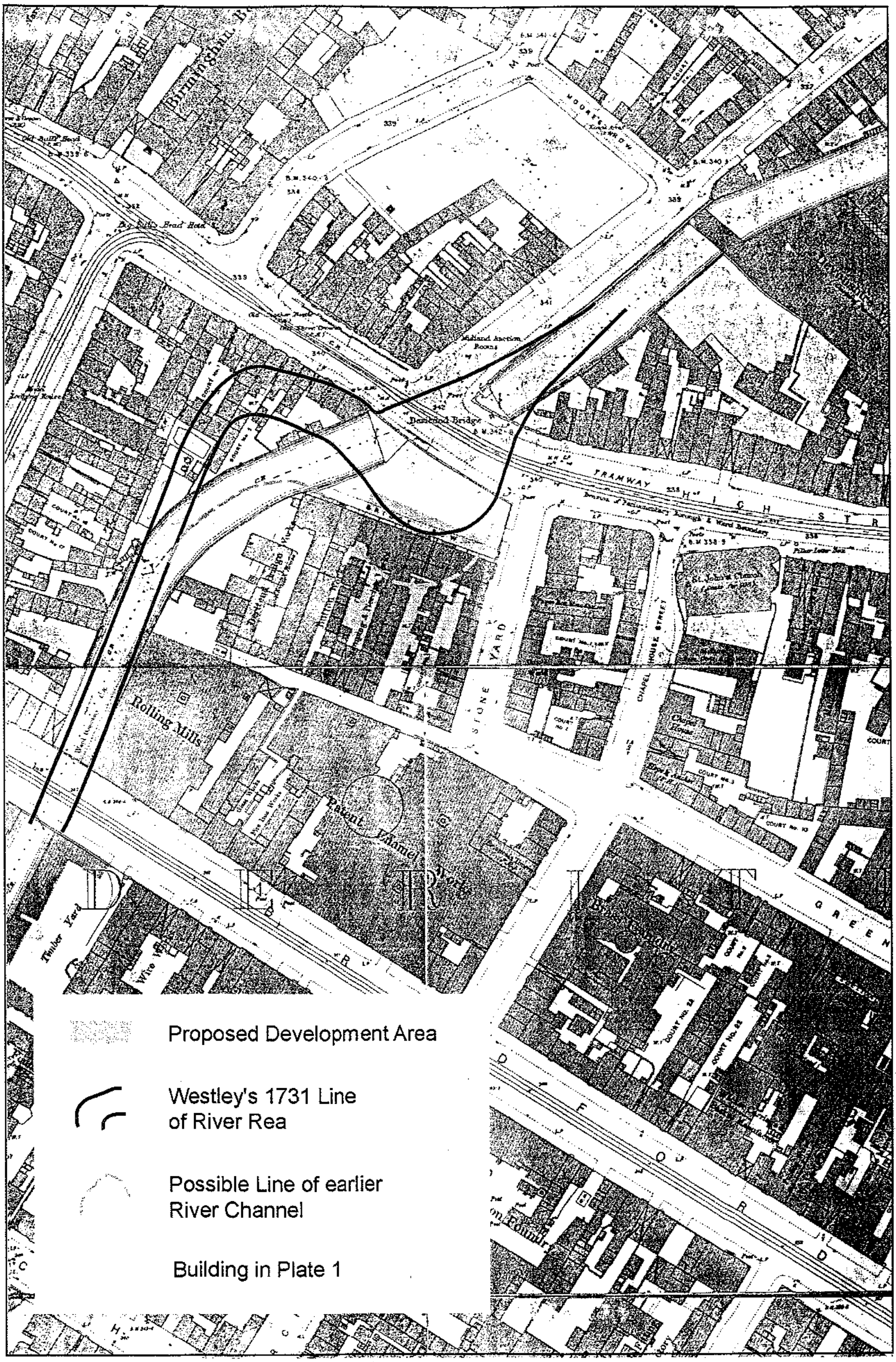

Proposed Development Area
Westley's 1731 Line
of River Rea
Possible Line of earlier
River Channel
Building in Plate 1
Rolling Mills
TRAMWAY
CHAPEL HOUSE STREET
Timber Yard

Fig.6

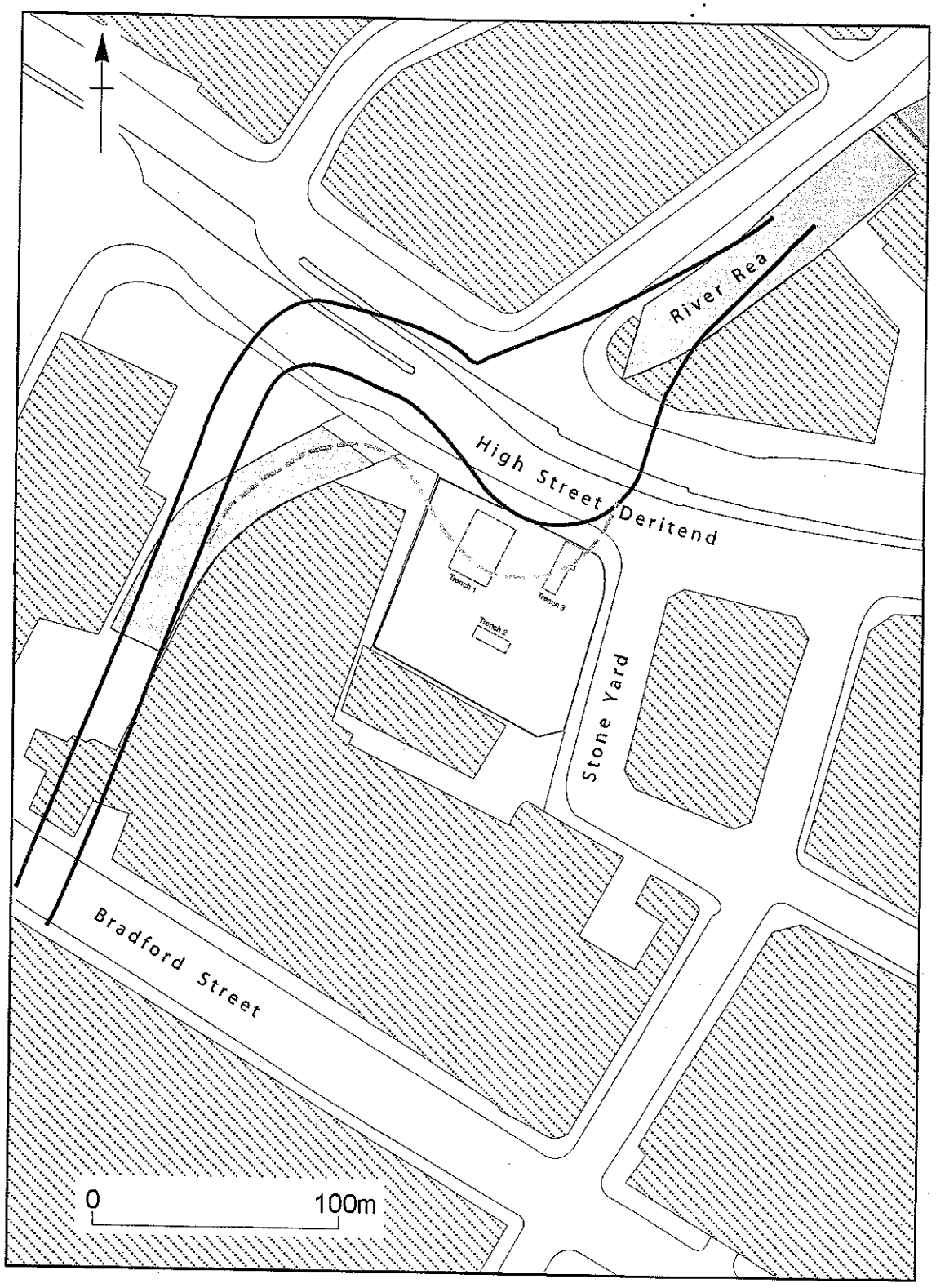

River Rea
High Street
Deritend
Trench 1
Trench 3
Trench 2
Stone Yard
Bradford Street
0
100m

Fig.7

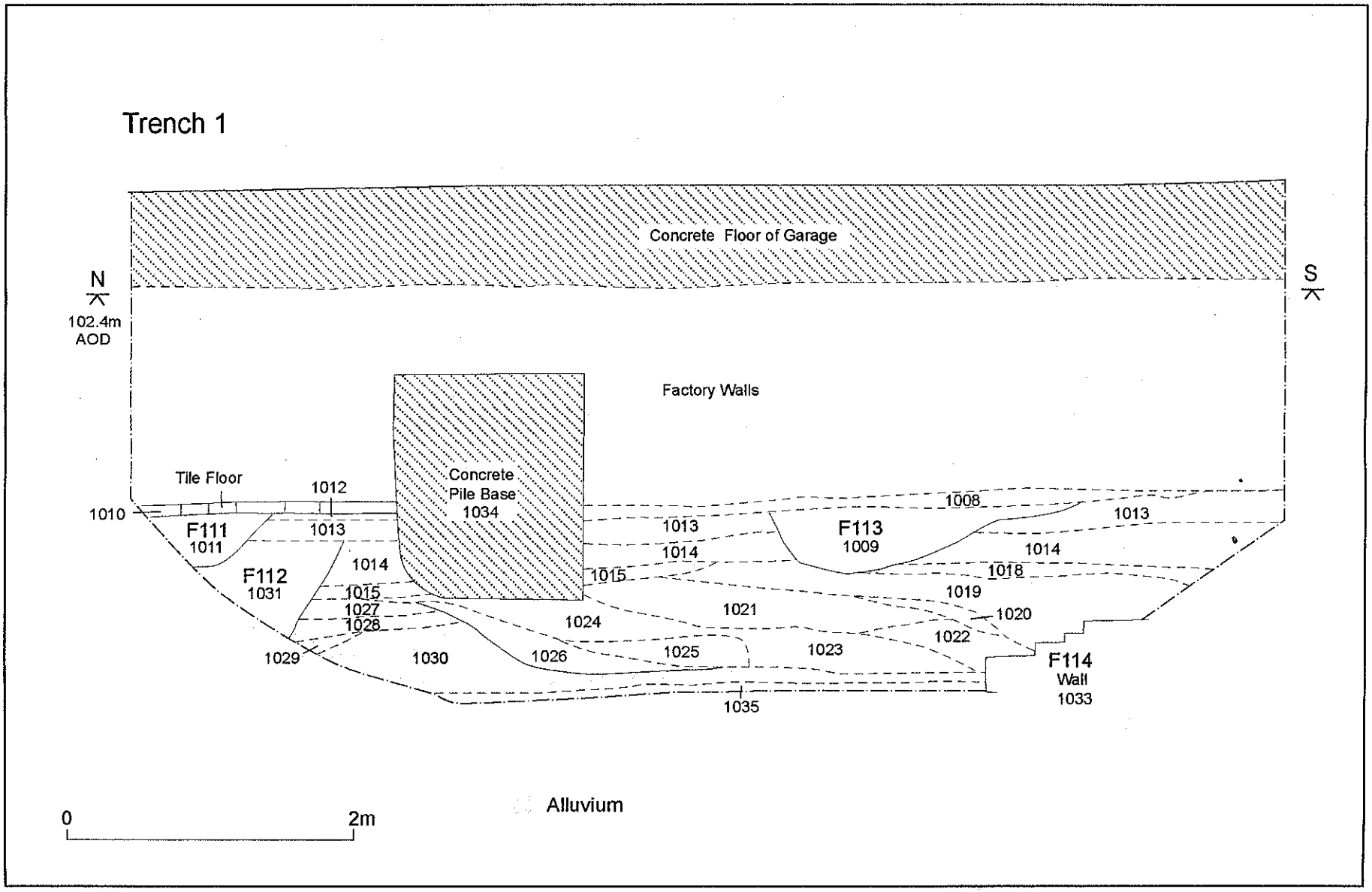

Trench 1
Concrete Floor of Garage
N
S
102.4m
AOD
Factory Walls
Tile Floor
1012
Concrete
Pile Base
1034
1010
F111
1011
1013
F112
1031
1014
1015
1027
1028
1029
1030
1026
1024
1025
1023
1021
1015
1013
1014
F113
1009
1008
1013
1014
1018
1019
1020
1022
F114
Wall
1033
1035
Alluvium
0
2m

Fig.8

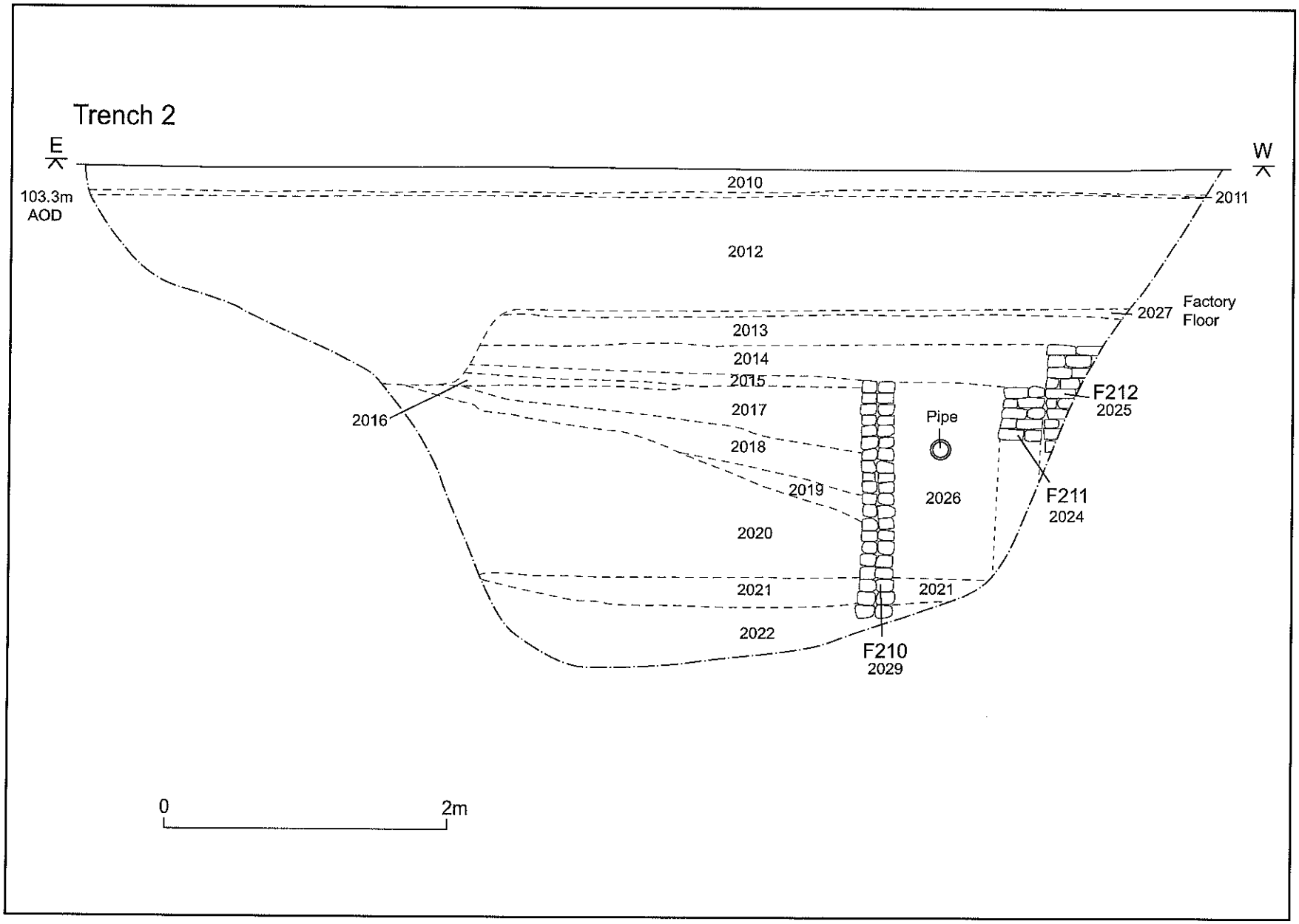

Trench 2
E
W
103.3m
AOD
2010
2011
2012
2027
Factory
Floor
2013
2014
2015
2016
2017
2018
2019
2020
2021
2021
2022
Pipe
2026
F212
2025
F211
2024
F210
2029
0
2m

Fig.9

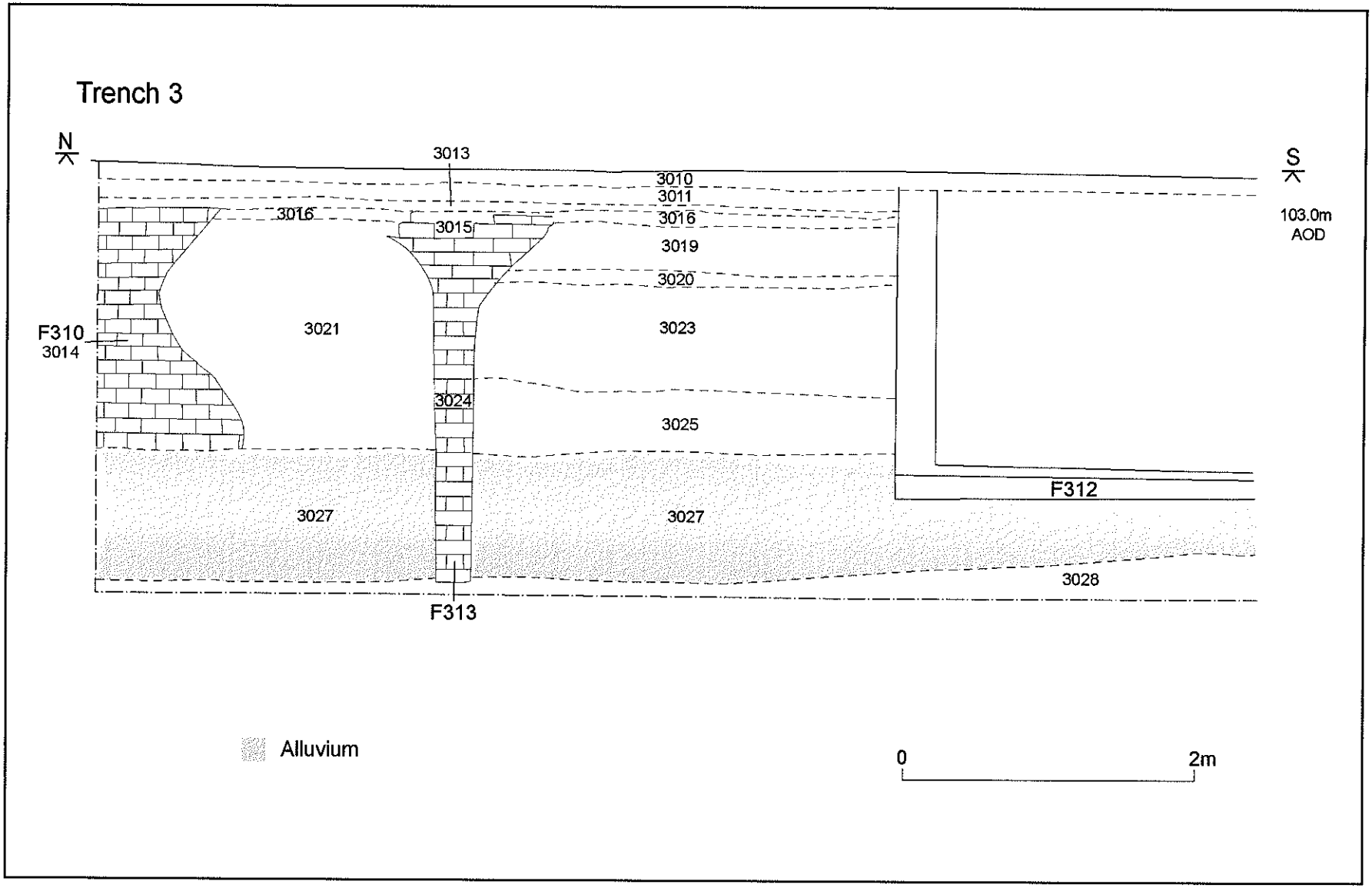

Trench 3
N
S
3013
3010
3011
3016
3016
3015
3019
3020
103.0m
AOD
F310
3014
3021
3023
3024
3025
F312
3027
3027
3028
F313
Alluvium
0
2m

Fig.10

OLD COUNTRY RESIDENCES IN DIGBETH,

Plate 1

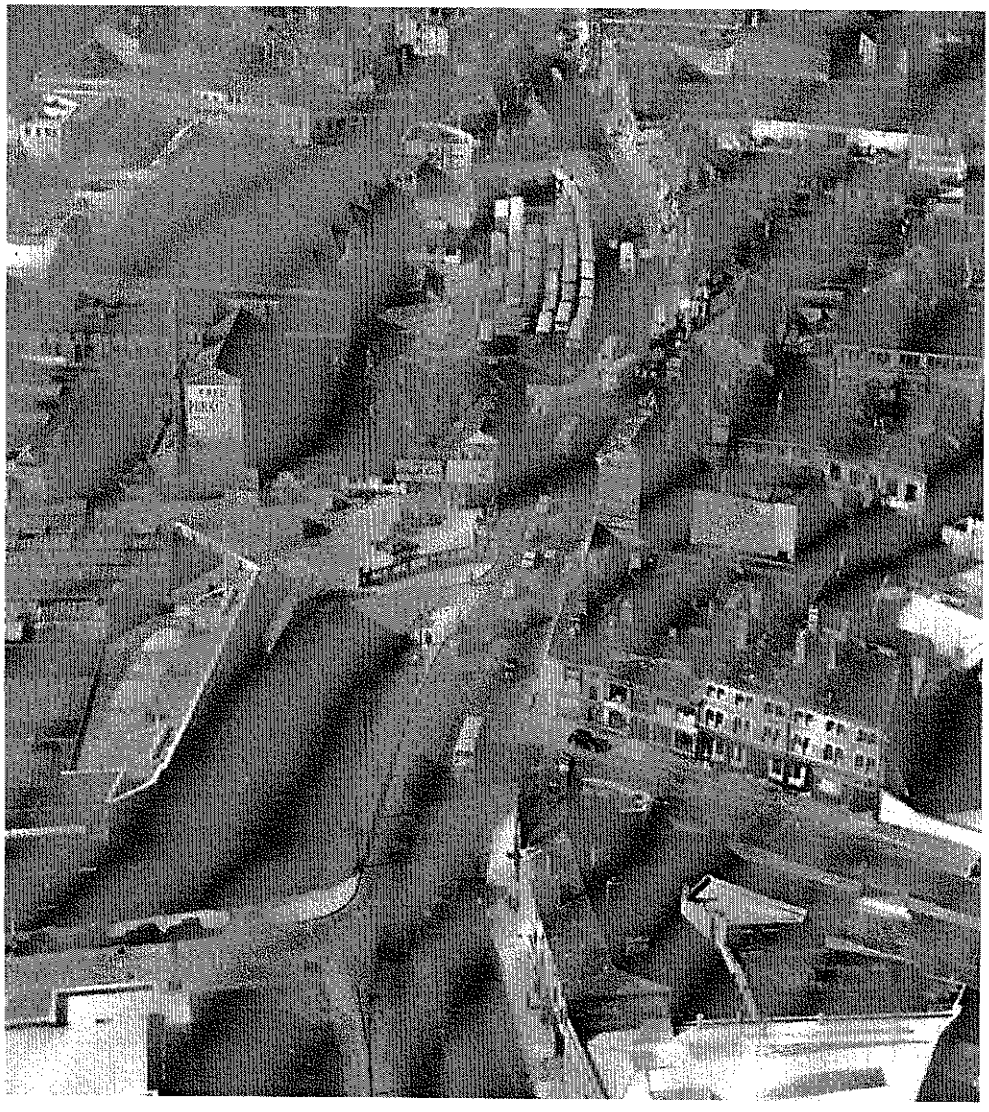


Plate 2

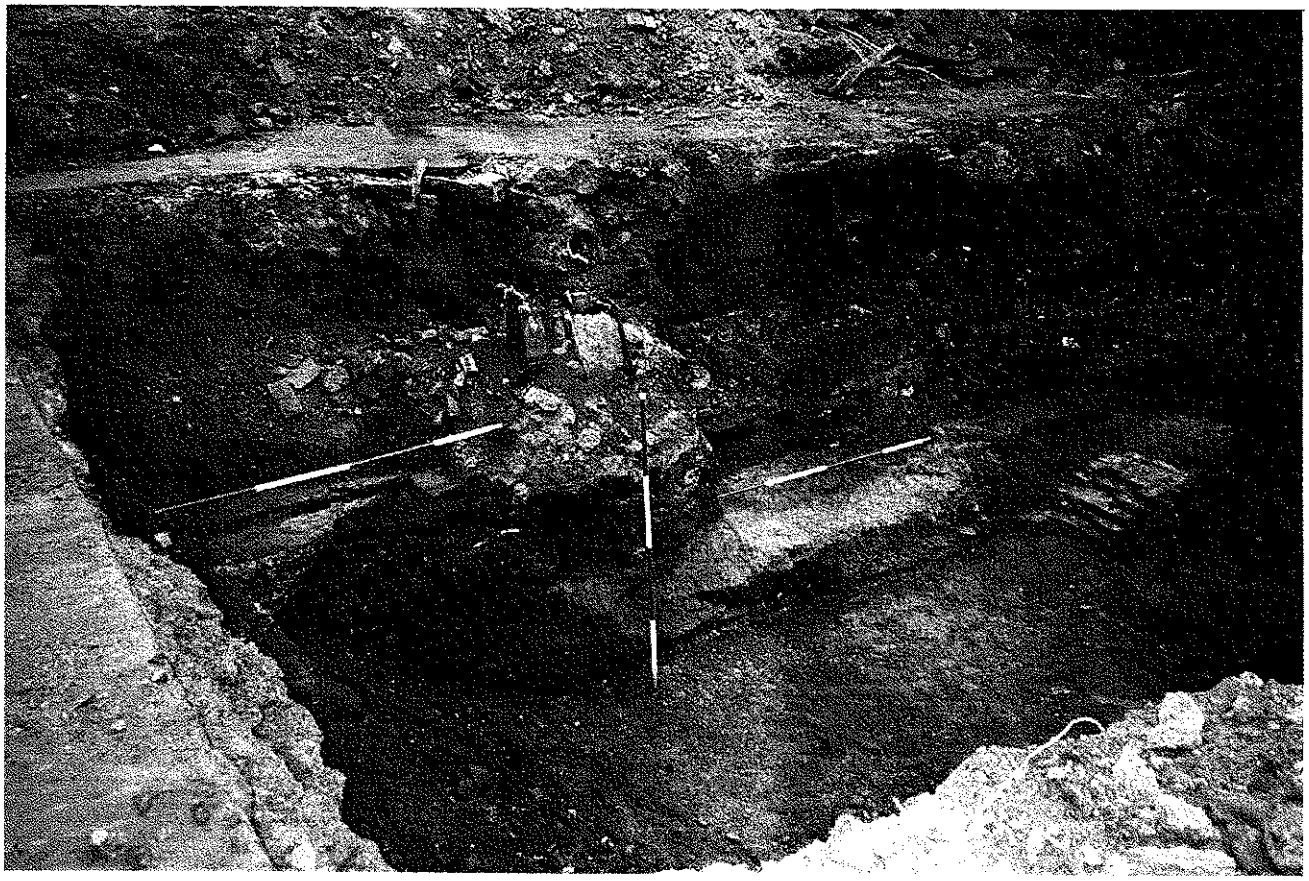


Plate 3

Plate 4

BIRMINGHAM CITY COUNCIL
PLANNING DEPARTMENT
Application number C/05275/03/OUT
High Street/Stone Yard(170 High Street Deritend)(SMR 20701; SP 0780 8629)
Brief for *Archaeological Field Evaluation* in advance of determination of application

1.Summary

Proposed development at 170 High Street Deritend is likely to affect below-ground archaeological remains of medieval and post-medieval date, including remains of industries and deposits likely to provide information on past environmental conditions. This brief is for assessment of the impact of the proposed development on archaeological remains, consisting of an ***archaeological field evaluation through excavated trenches.*** *This will determine the need for preservation of archaeological remains in-situ and/or for further archaeological excavation in advance of commencement of development.*

2.Site location and description

The site is bounded by High Street Deritend to the north, Stone Yard to the east and existing buildings to the west and south. It was formerly occupied by a petrol station, the superstructure of which has been demolished. The site has various surfaces and is approximately level. The ground rises up both sides of the valley of the River Rea to the north-west and south-east.

3.Planning background

Application number is for new building on the whole site. Because the site is likely to include archaeological remains which would be affected by the proposed redevelopment, an assessment of its archaeological implications is required **before the application can be determined.** This is in accordance with Policy 8.36 of the City Council's Unitary Development Plan, the City Council's Archaeology Strategy(Draft SPG) and government advice in Planning Policy Guidance Note 16, "Archaeology and Planning". The archaeological assessment will enable appropriate archaeological mitigation strategies to be devised. The mitigation strategies may involve modification of site layout or foundation design to ensure in situ preservation of archaeological remains, or, if this is not feasible, full recording of archaeological remains by archaeological excavation in advance of development, followed by analysis and publication of the results.

4.Existing archaeological information

The site was included in an archaeological desk-based assessment of the whole of the Digbeth/High Street Deritend/High Street Bordesley frontage in 1995. Historic maps show that by 1731 and up to the early 19th century the north part of the site was covered by a large pool where the River Rea made an abrupt turn before passing under Deritend Bridge. This formed the southern side of Deritend island to the north of the main road. The desk-based assessment suggested that

the turn in the river may be a natural feature, but may equally be man-made and associated with exploitation of the Rea to feed water mills and water-using industries such as leather tanning. The desk-based assessment suggested that, while the petrol tanks in the former petrol station forecourt will have caused some disturbance, archaeological deposits are likely to survive around them, particularly given the need to extensively raise the ground level in this area in the past because of problems of flooding. The desk-based assessment stated that the site had high potential for the survival of archaeological remains from the medieval period onwards, together with evidence for the past environment. Preservation is likely to be good because of the likely raising of the ground level and likely waterlogging.

The conclusions of an archaeological desk-based assessment of the application site in 2002 were as follows:
(i)The area around the River Rea may have been used by water-using industries in the medieval period;
(ii)The northern part of the site includes a former channel of the River Rea which is likely to contain palaeoenvironmental remains, including industrial residues;
(iii)The ground level was been raised by up to 2m in the early 19th century, sealing and preserving earlier deposits.

Information from nearby sites gives an indication of the likely archaeological remains on the application site. Immediately to its west, an archaeological evaluation on Rea Street in 2002 revealed a channel or pool, possibly a former course of the River Rea, which contained plant remains including hemp stems, suggesting that hemp retting took place on the site. To the north, excavations on the west of Floodgate Street in 2002 revealed extensive archaeological remains 2.5 to 3m below the present ground surface. They consisted of 12th or 13th century ditched property boundaries and extensive remains of leather tanning from the 16th to 18th centuries, including timber channels, bark used in the tanning process and horn cores and animal hair which was a residue from the process, and wasters from pottery manufacture in the 18th century. To the east of the site, further remains of leather tanning were found in excavations in Gibb Street/Heath Mill, and debris from pottery manufacture in the 13th century was found at the Old Crown and on the south side of High Street Deritend.

5.Requirements for work
The archaeological desk-based assessment and field evaluation are required to define the likely extent, survival and significance of archaeological remains in the area of the proposed development, so that appropriate mitigation strategies can be devised. The mitigation strategies may involve modification of site layout or foundation design to ensure in situ preservation of archaeological remains, or, if this is not feasible, full recording of archaeological remains in advance of development, followed by analysis and publication of the results.

In particular, the archaeological field evaluation must address the following:

(i)The survival of remains of industrial processes from the medieval period onwards;
(ii)The survival of remains of past environmental conditions and industrial residues, particularly in the former course of the River Rea;
(iii)Whether the 18th century river channel was man-made;
(iv)The potential of the site to contribute to an understanding of the historic development of this part of Birmingham.

6.Stages of work
The archaeological field evaluation is to consist of four excavated trenches, as recommended in the archaeological desk-based assessment: Two 10m long trenches as near to the High Street frontage as possible, to include the former river channel, and two 5m-long trenches at the rear of the site. The exact location and size of each trench is to be agreed on site with the Planning Archaeologist prior to commencement. Surface deposits in each trench are to be mechanically removed, under archaeological supervision. Subsequent excavation is to be entirely manual. Excavation in each trench is to be sufficient to define record and sample all archaeological features encountered. The potential of deposits for environmental analysis must be assessed. Finds are to be cleaned, marked and bagged and any remedial conservation work undertaken.

7.Staffing
The archaeological field evaluation is to be carried out in accordance with the Code of Conduct, Standards, Guidelines and practices of the Institute of Field Archaeologists, and all staff are to be suitably qualified and experienced for their roles in the project. It is recommended that the project be under the direct supervision of a Member or Associate Member of the Institute of Field Archaeologists.

8.Written Scheme of Investigation
Potential contractors should present a Written Scheme of Investigation that which details methods and staffing. It is recommended that the Written Scheme of Investigation be submitted to the City Council's Planning Archaeologist before a contractor is commissioned, to ensure that it meets the requirements of the brief.

9.Monitoring
The archaeological field evaluation must be carried out to the satisfaction of the Chief Planning Officer, Birmingham City Council, and will be monitored on his behalf by the Planning Archaeologist. At least five working days notice of commencement of the evaluation must be given to the Planning Archaeologist, so that monitoring meetings can be arranged.

10.Reporting

The results of the archaeological field evaluation are to be presented as a written report, containing the following:
(i)An analytical summary of features and deposits found in the evaluation;
(ii)Appropriate plans and sections;
(iii)A summary of finds;
(iv)An assessment of palaeoenvironmental remains and industrial residues:
(v)An assessment of the site's significance in terms of national, regional and local importance. The non-statutory criteria for scheduling should be employed;
(vi)A copy of this brief.
A copy of the report must be sent to the Planning Archaeologist.

11.Archive deposition
The written, drawn and photographic records of the archaeological field evaluation, together with any finds, must be deposited with an appropriate repository within a reasonable time of completion, following consultation with the Planning Archaeologist.

12.Publication
The written report will become publicly accessible, as part of the Birmingham Sites and Monuments Record, within six months of completion. The contractor must submit a short summary report for inclusion in *West Midlands Archaeology* and summary reports to appropriate national period journals.

CHIEF PLANNING OFFICER
BIRMINGHAM CITY COUNCIL
Date prepared: 11 September 2003
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