



THE UNIVERSITY
OF BIRMINGHAM

**An archaeological watching
brief during groundworks at
St. Philip's Place,
Temple Row, Birmingham,
West Midlands**

Birmingham University Field Archaeology Unit



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Project No. 845
December 2001

**An archaeological watching brief during groundworks at St. Philip's Place, Temple Row,
Birmingham, West Midlands**

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1.0 Summary

An archaeological watching brief was undertaken during the excavation of service trenches and junction pits for a new building at St. Philip's Place, Temple Row, Birmingham City Centre (NGR SP 0700 8720), between September and December 2001. This was carried out by Birmingham University Field Archaeology Unit and commissioned by CgMs Consulting Ltd on behalf of GPU Power Engineering. Prior to the development at St. Philip's Place, an extensive watching brief had taken place within the present boundary of the churchyard (Patrick 2001). Results suggested that the previous boundary of the churchyard extended into the area of the proposed development. The location of the proposed service trenches and junction pits was within the possible previous limits of St. Philip's Cathedral Churchyard. As a condition of the planning application, and of the Home Office licence for the removal of human remains, any groundworks were to be monitored by a suitably qualified archaeologist in order to record any archaeological deposits and to recover any human remains and associated artefacts. No archaeological deposits or human remains were recorded during any stage of the watching brief. The absence of archaeological material was most likely due to the new service trenches being dug through ground previously excavated and re-instated for existing services.

2.0 Introduction

This report describes the results of an archaeological watching brief undertaken at St. Philip's Place, Temple Row, Birmingham during the excavation of trenches and junction pits to receive high voltage cables for the Carillion Building. The work was carried out in accordance with planning conditions, and those of the Home Office Licence For The Removal Of Human Remains (licence number A3382). The groundwork was carried out between September and December 2001 by Norwest Holst, on behalf of GPU Power Engineering. Due to the intended groundworks' close proximity to St. Philip's Churchyard, Birmingham University Field Archaeology Unit was commissioned by CgMs Consulting to monitor these excavations to assess the date, depth, extent and nature of any archaeological deposits encountered and to recover any human remains and associated artefacts. The watching brief was carried out in accordance with the Institute of Field Archaeologists, 1999 *Standard and Guidance for an Archaeological Watching Brief*. As condition of the Home Office licence, George Harbutt, a representative from Birmingham City Council Environmental Services was also present.

3.0 Site location and history (Figs 1 and 2)

The site constitutes an area of pavement along St. Philip's Place to the east and north-east of St. Philip's Cathedral, and on the present boundary of the Cathedral Churchyard

centred on (NGR SP 0700 8720). Evidence for the development of St. Philip's Churchyard and the surrounding area comes mainly from map, pictorial and secondary documentary sources.

The earliest known representation of the church and its grounds is Westley's map of 1731. This stylistic representation of the churchyard shows a perimeter wall with an internal perimeter path flanked by a row of trees on either side. Paths are illustrated leading from St. Philip's Cathedral to the surrounding streets, much as they do today, with a few tombs and headstones on the grassed areas.

Due to the high concentration of burials within the boundary of St. Philip's, the churchyard was closed to burials on 15th August 1858. Burials in existing vaults and brick-lined graves continued after this date, although the lack of documentation means that all but a few are anonymous. The problem of burial for the masses was only resolved by the opening of the corporation cemetery at Witton in 1863.

While the pathways within the churchyard have remained broadly the same, changes to the boundaries have taken place. Alterations to the boundaries took place in 1900 with the widening of Temple Row West and St. Philip's Place at the expense of the burial ground. Letters from both 1839 and 1899 concerning the boundary alterations gave instruction as to what to do with any human remains that were disturbed during the work, and how arrangements were to be made for their re-interment

4.0 Objectives

The principal objective of the watching brief was to identify and record any significant archaeological deposits prior to their destruction during the excavation of the service trenches and junction pits. Particular attention was paid to the identification and recovery of any human remains, funerary monuments, and associated artefacts.

5.0 Method

All service trenches were excavated with a 1.5 tonne tracked excavator fitted with an appropriate bucket and, where necessary, finished with manual excavation. This was monitored with a continuous archaeological presence. Where appropriate, surfaces and sections were hand cleaned to aid interpretation and recording. A detailed context record on individual pro-forma record cards was maintained and all features were photographed using both colour and black and white film. Sections and plans were drawn at a scale of 1:50 or 1:20 as appropriate. Where no archaeological deposits were identified, a record of the stratigraphy was made. These records constitute the site archive, which is stored at Birmingham University Field Archaeology Unit at the time of writing.

6.0 Results (Figs 2 and 3)

Service Trenches

Trench 1 (Fig. 3)

This trench was 25.2m long and 0.4m in width and depth. The trench excavation followed the course of existing services, maximum depth being reached when these existing services became visible. The trench was dug into re-instated ground, which appeared to consist of 0.34m of mixed layers containing orange sharp sand, grey roadstone, and sand and gravel ballast; these were all sealed by a 0.06m thick layer of concrete paving slabs (Fig. 3; Plate 4). No evidence of archaeological deposits or human remains was recorded.

Trench 2 (Fig. 3; Plate 1)

This trench was 7.8m long, 0.4m wide and 0.75m deep. As in the case of Trench 1, the excavation followed the course of existing services, with maximum depth being reached when existing services became visible. The trench was dug into re-instated ground, which appeared to consist of 0.69m of mixed layers containing red building sand, pinkish grey roadstone, lenses of asphalt, and silted sand and gravel; these were all sealed by a 0.06m thick layer of concrete paving slabs (Fig. 3). No evidence of archaeological deposits or human remains was recorded.

Trench 3 (Plate 2)

This trench constituted a pit measuring approximately 6.1m by 2.4m and was dug to a depth of 1.3m, where existing services became visible. The pit was dug into re-instated ground which appeared to consist of 1.24m of mixed layers containing red building sand and gravel, concrete, clean red building sand, mixed brown earth and pebbles, and orange brown sand and pebbles; these were all sealed by a 0.06m thick layer of concrete paving slabs. No evidence of archaeological deposits or human remains was recorded.

Trench 4 (Plate 3)

This trench constituted a pit measuring approximately 1.5m by 3.0m and was dug to a depth of 0.8m, where existing services became visible. The pit was dug into re-instated ground which appeared to consist of 0.74m of mixed layers containing concrete and mixed brown earth with pebbles, sealed by a 0.06m thick layer of concrete paving slabs. No evidence of archaeological deposits or human remains was recorded.

7.0 Discussion

The cartographic evidence demonstrates that the Churchyard boundaries previously extended further out than they do today. A recent archaeological watching brief carried

out by Birmingham University Field Archaeological Unit at St. Philip's Cathedral recorded human burials, a vault, and disarticulated human bone along Temple Row, outside the present-day boundary. Further disarticulated bone was recorded in tree-pits around the Churchyard. The results of the watching brief thus supported the cartographic evidence that the Churchyard was previously larger. These results also suggested that St Philips Place lay within the original boundaries of the Churchyard, and so groundworks were monitored against the possibility that human remains and associated artefacts were present. The recorded stratigraphy confirmed that the immediate area had been subject to extensive disturbance in recent times. No evidence of archaeological deposits or human remains and associated artefacts were recorded during any stage of the watching brief. Further work, however, may reveal evidence of archaeological deposits and human remains outside the present boundary of the Cathedral Churchyard, in areas less disturbed by modern development.

8.0 Acknowledgements

Richard H. Cherrington conducted the archaeological watching brief and wrote this report. The project was managed by Gary Coates. Illustrations were prepared by Nigel Dodds. Simon Buteux edited this report.

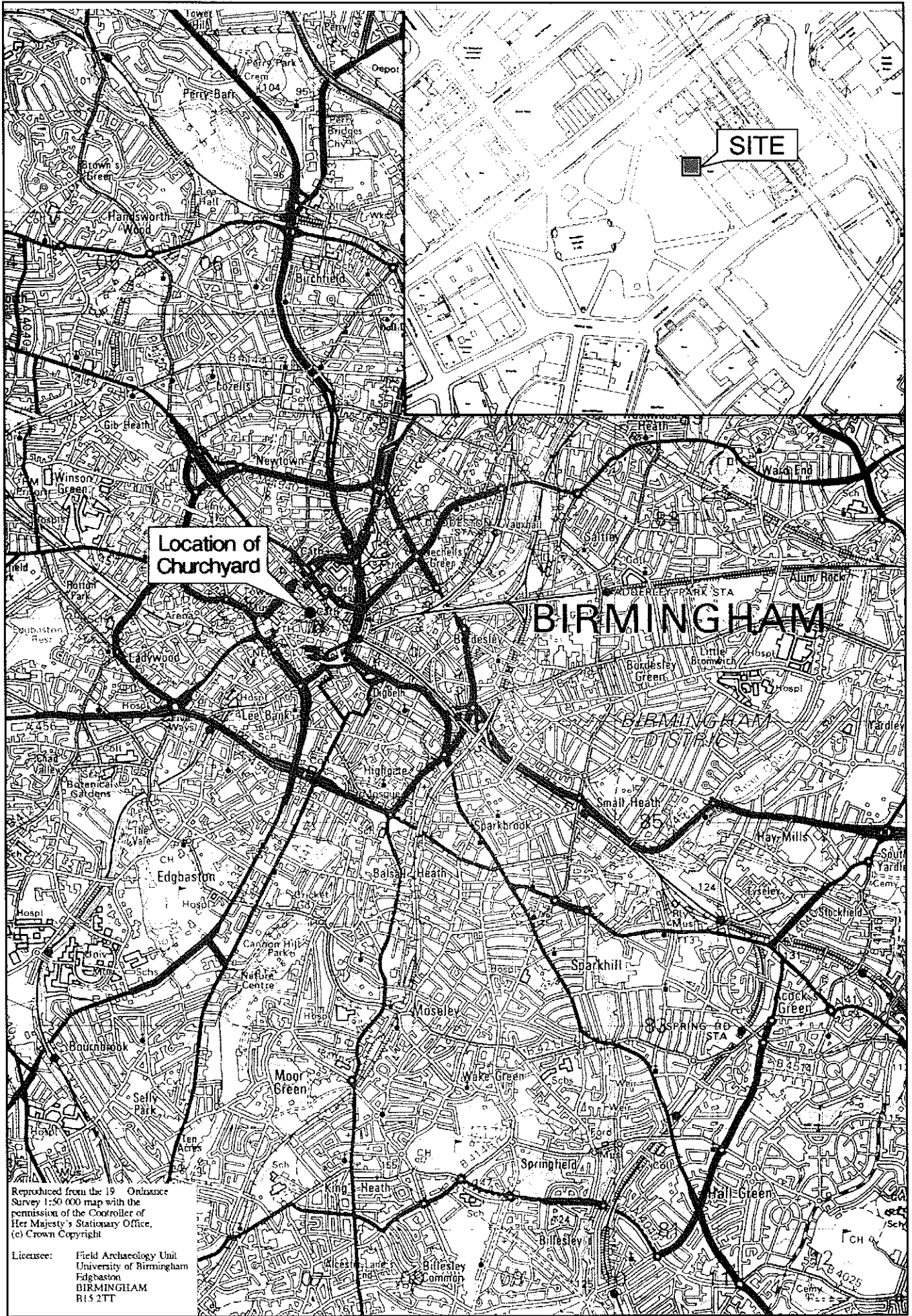
Cathy Mould monitored the watching brief on behalf of CgMs Consulting. Dr Mike Hodder monitored the watching brief on behalf of Birmingham City Council. George Harbutt represented Birmingham City Council Environmental Services. We are grateful for the co-operation and assistance of David Hedges from GPU Power Engineering and the civil engineers from Norwest Holst.

9.0 References

Moscrop, D. 1997 *The Churchyard of St Philips Cathedral, Birmingham, An Archaeological Desk-Based Assessment*. BUFAU Report No 455

Patrick, C. 2001 *The Churchyard of St Philips Cathedral, Birmingham: An archaeological watching brief*. BUFAU Report No 701

Figures



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Fig.1

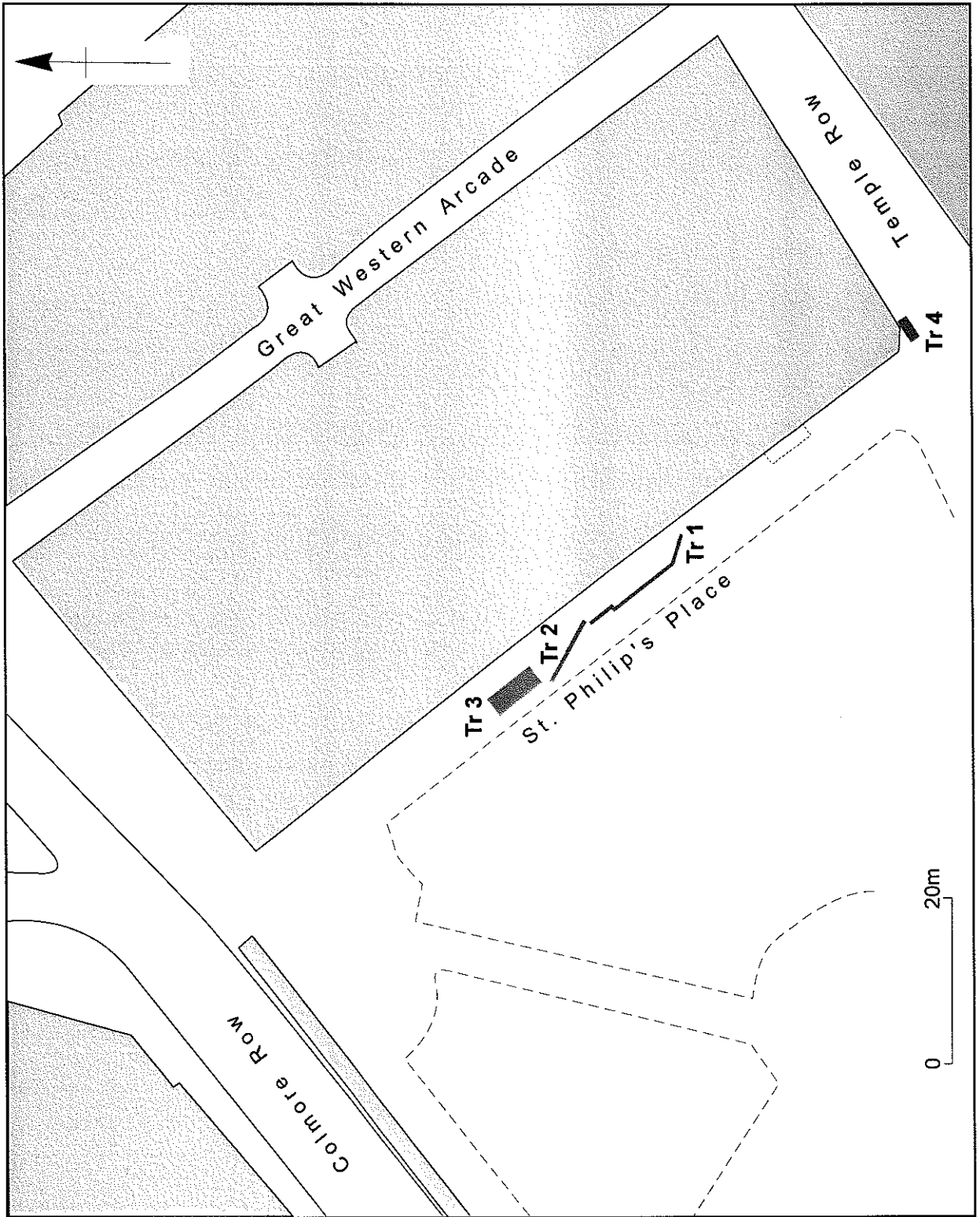
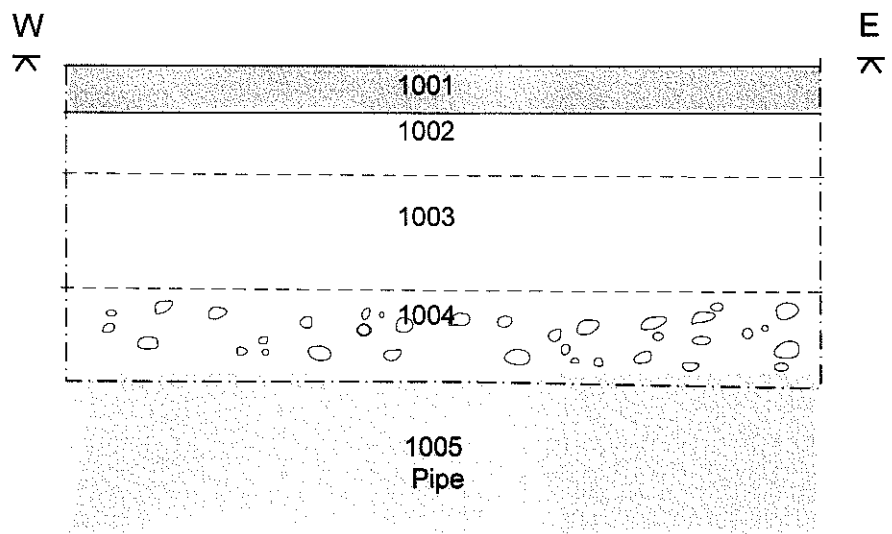
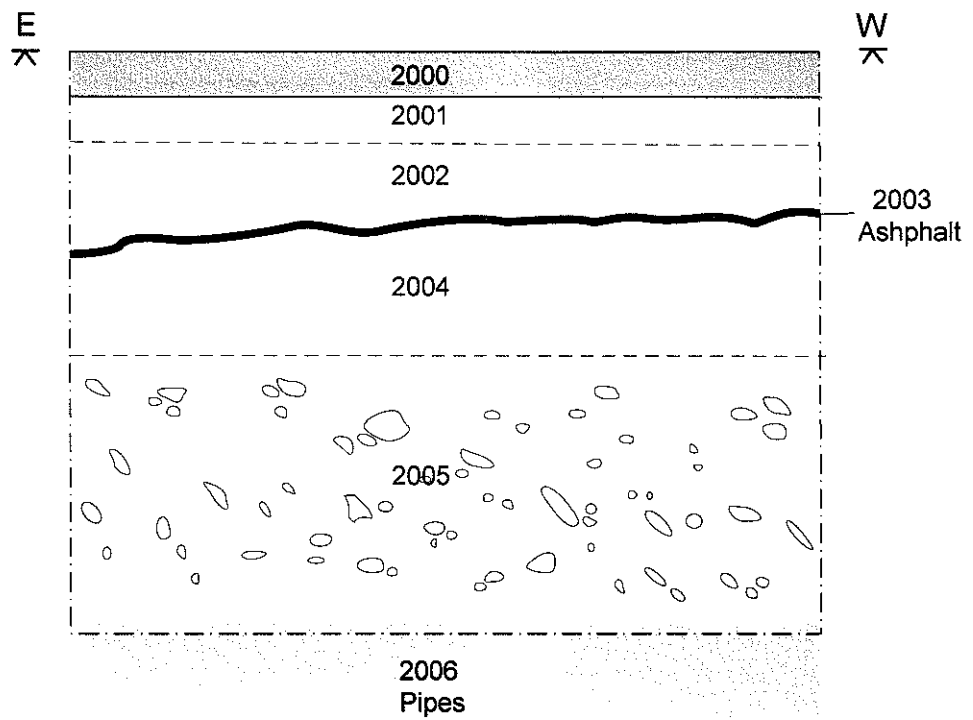


Fig.2

Trench 1



Trench 2



0 50cm

Fig.3

Plates

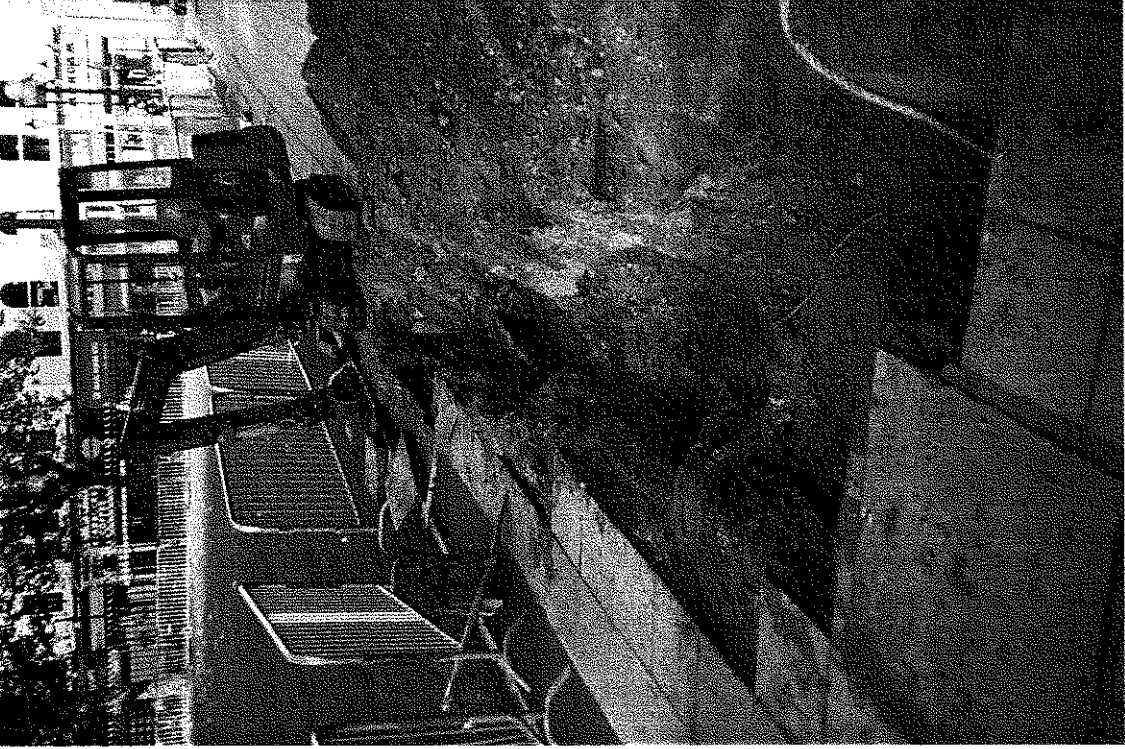


Plate 1



Plate 2



Plate 3



Plate 4