

birmingham archaeology

The Friary, Lichfield,
Staffordshire:
An Archaeological Watching Brief
2008

Project No. 1739

**The Friary, Lichfield, Staffordshire:
an archaeological watching brief 2008**

by
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Specification for an archaeological watching brief. Greyfriars, Lichfield. Staffordshire County Council

SUMMARY

In January 2008 Birmingham Archaeology undertook an archaeological watching brief at The Friary, Lichfield, Staffordshire (centred on SK 1159 0935) during the excavation of a trench for communication cables to south of the remains of the Franciscan Friary (Scheduled Ancient Monument No. 21560, SMR PRN 00048). The Franciscan Friary at Lichfield is thought to have been established around 1237 and was dissolved in 1538.

The trench was excavated within the pavement area on the northwest side of the street known as 'The Friary'. Undated sandstone foundations for a northwest-southeast orientated wall were revealed in the southwest part of the trench. The sandstone wall was probably associated with the Friary cloister or other structures relating to the Friary, remains of which are located adjacent to the northwest. No other significant archaeological features or deposits were encountered and no artefacts were recovered.

The Friary, Lichfield, Staffordshire: an archaeological watching brief 2008

1 INTRODUCTION

Birmingham Archaeology was commissioned by Enterprise Managed Services Limited to carry out an archaeological watching brief during the installation of communication cables at The Friary, Lichfield, Staffordshire. The site is part of a scheduled ancient monument and scheduled monument consent was applied for and granted for these works.

This report outlines the results of a watching brief which was prepared in accordance with the Institute of Field Archaeologists' *Standard and Guidance for an Archaeological Watching Brief* (IFA 2001) and carried out in January 2008. The watching brief conformed to a brief produced by Staffordshire County Council (2007, Appendix).

2 LOCATION AND GEOLOGY

The site is located within the footpath area on the northwest side of The Friary, to the south of the Franciscan Friary, a Scheduled Ancient Monument (SAM No. 21560 and SMR No. PRN 00048), and is centred on NGR SK 1159 0935 (hereinafter referred to as 'the site', Fig. 1).

The underlying geology consists of Bromsgrove sandstone (BGS 2007, sheet 154).

The present character of the site is a brick pavement at the east part of the site and grassed verge area at the west part of the site. To the immediate northeast of the site is a public open space containing the remains of the Franciscan Friary while to the immediate south, aligned northeast-southwest is the road The Friary.

3 OBJECTIVES

The objectives of the project as stated in the brief are:

- To ensure the archaeological monitoring of all aspects of the development programme likely to affect archaeological remains.
- To identify and record archaeological features and deposits associated with the Friary, its dissolution and subsequent phases of occupation across the site.
- To secure the analysis, conservation and long-term storage of any artefactual/ecofactual material recovered from the site.

4 METHODOLOGY

The watching brief was carried out during groundworks for the installation of communications cables which comprised the excavation of a narrow trench (Fig. 2), 56m long and 0.40m-1.00m wide, using a bobcat excavator with a toothless bucket. Where necessary, hand cleaning was undertaken.

All stratigraphic sequences were recorded, even where no archaeology was present. Features were planned at a scale of 1:10, and sections were drawn of all cut features and significant vertical stratigraphy at a scale of 1:10. A comprehensive written record was maintained using a continuous numbered context system on pro-forma context cards. Written records and scale

plans will be supplemented by photographs using monochrome, colour print and colour slide photography.

The site archive was prepared according to guidelines set down in Appendix 3 of the Management of Archaeological Projects (English Heritage, 1991), the Guidelines for the Preparation of Excavation Archives for Long-term Storage (Walker 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 an appropriate museum within 12 months of the completion of the fieldwork, subject to permission from the landowner.

5 HISTORICAL AND ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

The following information is contained within the brief for the work (see appendix):

Lichfield has a long and complex history and was an ecclesiastical centre for the Mercian bishopric during the 7th and 8th centuries. Following privations at the hands of occupying Danes during the 9th century, the cathedral was only re-established in the late 11th century as an ecclesiastical powerbase. In the later 12th century the town was formerly laid out adjacent to the Minster Pool with Bird Street (a corruption of Bridge Street) a principal thoroughfare through the new town. The application site lies within the historic core of the settlement and the HER records two references for the site including the medieval borough of Lichfield (PRN 02351).

The Franciscan Friary at Lichfield is thought to have been established around 1237 and was dissolved in 1538 by which time the community was relatively small and impoverished. The church consisted of an aisled nave with an aisleless quire and a portion of the north wall to the nave still stands within the garden. A road was constructed across the site during the early part of the twentieth century while work within No.1 Bird Street indicates that the graveyard associated with the Friary extended to the north across Bird Street. Demolition rubble was found to form the foundations of the Friars Alley wall and further remains associated with the medieval Friary are thought to be present within the area of proposed works.

(Staffordshire County Council 2007, 1)

6 RESULTS

The natural subsoil, a red or orange sand (106 and 114, Sections 2 and 3; Fig.3 and Plate 2), was reached at 0.33-0.40m below the present ground surface at the southwest part of the trench. In the northeast part of the trench the natural was not encountered and a maximum depth of 1.13m was reached (Plate 1). In the southwest part of the trench the natural subsoil 114 was cut by the undated foundations of northwest-southeast orientated sandstone wall (113, Section 3; Fig. 3 and Plates 3-6), 0.90m wide and at least 0.34m high. It was made of unmortared sandstone blocks 0.10-0.15m high, at least 0.40m wide and 0.20-0.30 in breadth. Wall foundation 113 and the natural subsoil were overlain by mid brown sand layer (112, 105 and 102 Sections 1, 2 and 3; Fig. 3) containing brick fragments, at least 0.10-0.40m deep.

Layer 112 was cut by a modern concrete foundation (111), 0.24m wide and at least 0.16m deep, forming the base for a concrete kerbstone, 0.5m wide and 0.07m high, built on top of foundation 113. Probably contemporary with 111, overlying layer 112, was a layer of tarmac

(109), 0.05m thick, which was a former road surface. This was overlaid by topsoil and turf (107), 0.04m deep, forming the present grass verge which also partially overlaid kerbstone 111. To the northeast of concrete foundation 111, overlying 112, was a layer of beige sand and hardcore (110, 104 and 101), 0.05-0.62m deep, containing a lens of black ash/coal (103, Section 2; Fig. 3). This was overlain, in places, by dark orange red sand (108), 0.06m thick. Layers 101/ 104 and 108 were sealed by the present brick pavement (100), 0.07m deep.

7 FINDS

No finds were recovered during the watching brief.

8 CONCLUSIONS

The remains of the substantial undated sandstone wall foundations 113 are likely to relate to the Franciscan Friary adjacent to the northeast. The wall may be associated with the Friary cloister or other structures south of the Friary church. However, the alignment of the wall 113 does not appear to be in line with the projected course of the cloister wall, as marked out on the ground to the northeast. The projected line of the cloister wall would appear to be slightly to the northeast of wall 113. However, it is unclear how the cloister wall marked out on the ground reflects the actual position of the cloister wall.

The foundations were left mainly in situ with communications cabling being installed above the sandstone wall at this location. The majority of deposits encountered appear to form a level foundation for the modern pavement and, in the southwest part of the trench, for the road.

9 ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The project was commissioned by Enterprise Managed Services Limited. Thanks are due to the groundwork team for their co-operation and assistance throughout the project. Thanks also go to Stephen Dean, Historic Environment Officer, Staffordshire County Council, who monitored the project on behalf of Staffordshire County Council. The watching brief was undertaken by Elisabeth Bishop who produced the written report. The report was illustrated by Nigel Dodds, and edited by Laurence Jones who also managed the project for Birmingham Archaeology.

10 REFERENCES

English Heritage, 1991 *Management of Archaeological Projects*. London, English Heritage.

Institute of Field Archaeologists, 2001 *standard and guidance for an archaeological watching brief*

Museums and Galleries Commission 1992 *Standards in the museum care of archaeological collections*. London: Museums and Galleries Commission

Staffordshire County Council 2007, *specification for an archaeological watching brief. Greyfriars, Lichfield*

Walker, K. 1990 Guidelines for the preparation of excavation archives for long-term storage. UKIC, London

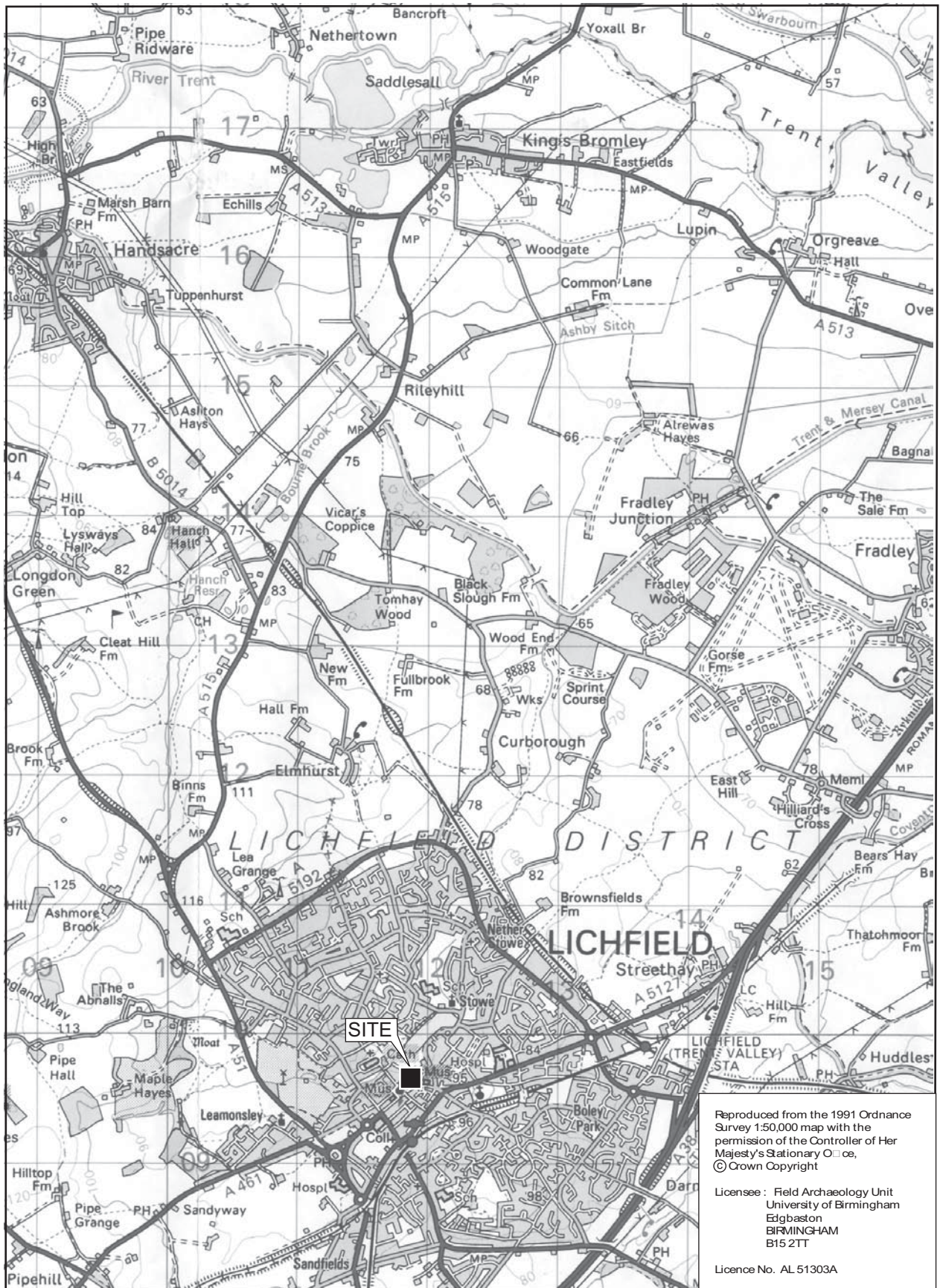


Fig.1

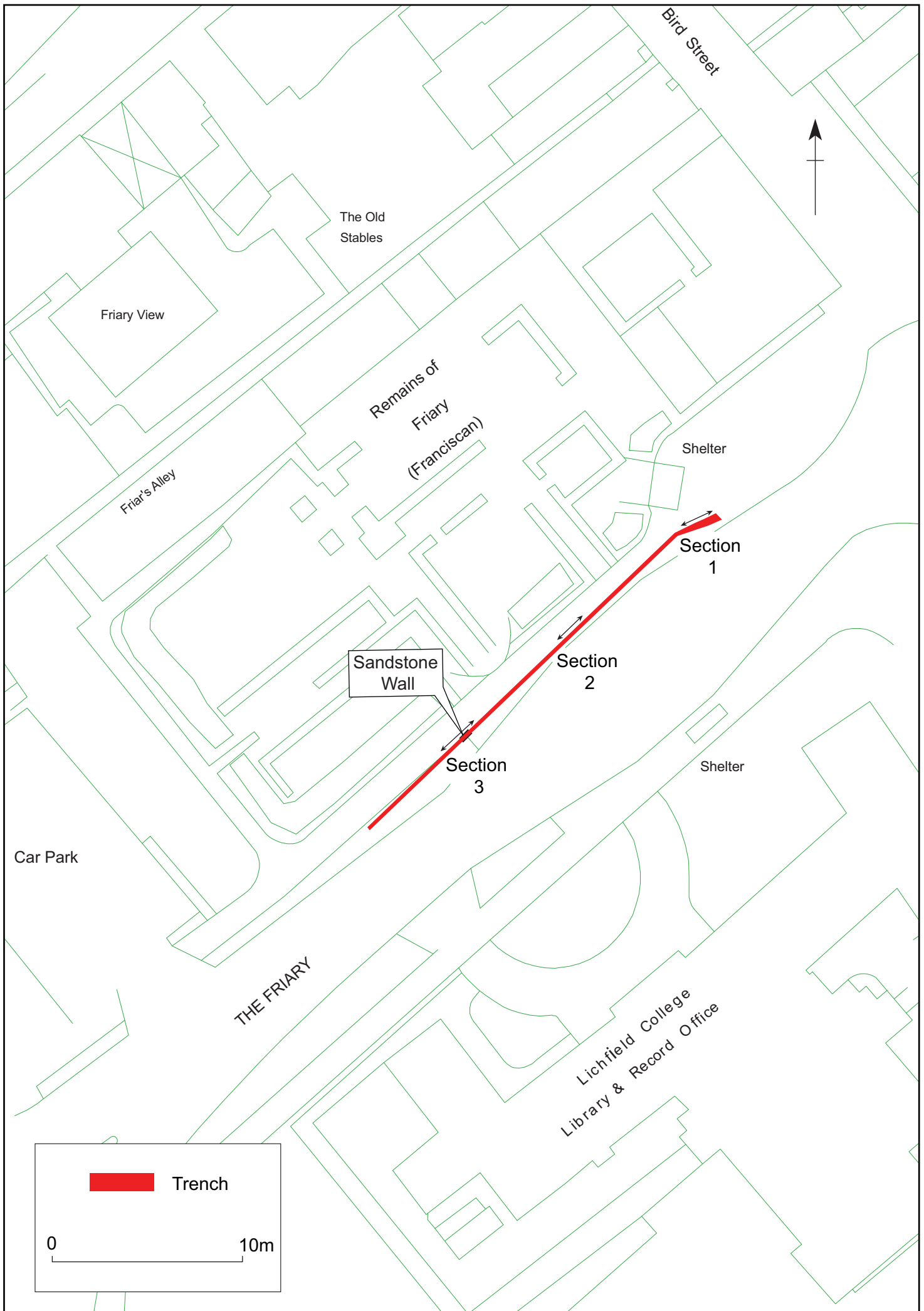


Fig.2

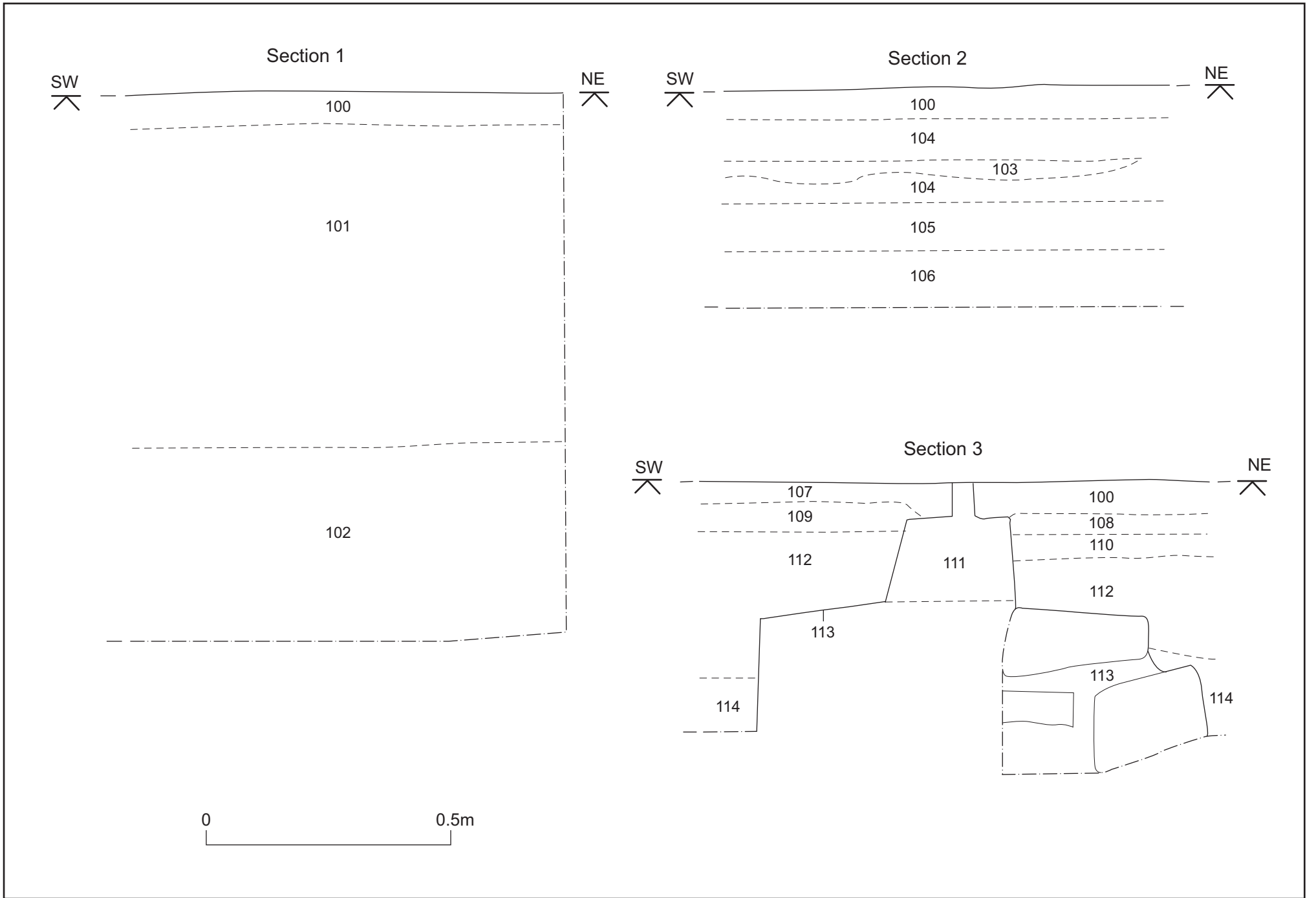


Fig.3



Plate 1



Plate 2



Plate 3



Plate 4



Plate 5



Plate 6

**SPECIFICATION FOR AN
ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF**

GREY FRIARS, LICHFIELD

October 2007

Staffordshire
County Council

1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 An application for Scheduled Monument Consent was forwarded to English Heritage for proposed works including the laying of 56 metres of duct within the footpath northwestern side of The Friary. The proposed works lie within the historic core of medieval Lichfield and wholly within the bounds of the Scheduled Franciscan Friary (PRN 00048 and SAM No. 21560). Scheduled Monument Consent has been approved for these works (dated 30 July 2007) with the requirement that an archaeological watching brief be undertaken all groundworks. The objective of this Specification therefore is to establish a framework which is acceptable to the Local Planning Authority (LPA), acting on the advice of the County Archaeological Officer (CAO), within which a watching brief may be carried out. This Specification has been prepared by the Staffordshire County Archaeologist with the knowledge of the English Heritage Inspector of Ancient Monuments for Staffordshire.
- 1.2 The watching brief will be conducted in accordance with this specification and will be carried out in accordance with the Institute of Field Archaeologists *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Watching Briefs* (2001). All stages of the project will be carried out in accordance with the requirements established in the English Heritage volume entitled the 'Management of Archaeological Projects' (MAP2).
- 1.3 This Specification may be used as the Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) or the archaeological contractor may choose to prepare their own WSI. Any variation from the methodology outlined in this specification or within a subsequent WSI should be agreed in advance by the developer, the LPA and English Heritage.

2.0 HISTORICAL/ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

- 2.1 Lichfield has a long and complex history and was an ecclesiastical centre for the Mercian bishopric during the 7th and 8th centuries. Following privations at the hands of occupying Danes during the 9th century, the cathedral was only re-established in the late 11th century as an ecclesiastical powerbase. In the later 12th century the town was formerly laid out adjacent to the Minster Pool with Bird Street (a corruption of Bridge Street) a principal thoroughfare through the new town. The application site lies within the historic core of the settlement and the HER records two references for the site including the medieval borough of Lichfield (PRN 02351).
- 2.2 The Franciscan Friary at Lichfield is thought to have been established around 1237 and was dissolved in 1538 by which time the community was relatively small and impoverished. The church consisted of an aisled nave with an aisleless quire and a portion of the north wall to the nave still stands within the garden. A road was constructed across the site during the early part of the twentieth century while work within No.1 Bird Street indicates that the graveyard associated with the Friary extended to the north across Bird Street. Demolition rubble was found to form the foundations of the Friars Alley wall and further remains associated with the medieval Friary are thought to be present within the area of proposed works.

3.0 PROJECT OBJECTIVES

- 3.1 To ensure the archaeological monitoring of all aspects of the development programme likely to affect archaeological remains.
- 3.2 To identify and record archaeological features and deposits associated with the Friary, its dissolution and subsequent phases of occupation across the site.
- 3.3 To secure the analysis, conservation and long-term storage of any artefactual/ecofactual material recovered from the site.

4.0 ARCHAEOLOGICAL REQUIREMENTS

- 4.1 This specification may act as the agreed Written Scheme of Investigation for the archaeological contractor providing that all parties accept the methodologies for fieldwork and report preparation contained herein. The project should include the following as appropriate:

1. To carry out an intensive watching brief on ground works in and around the line of the canal as identified in section 2.0 and an intermittent watching brief across the rest of the development site. All mechanical topsoil and subsoil stripping is to be carried out under archaeological supervision and must be undertaken using a toothless bucket.
2. A programme of post-fieldwork analysis, archiving and publication.
- 4.2 A written record of the progress of the watching brief shall be maintained and supported by the production of plans and sections drawings (at appropriate scales). A scaled photographic record (polychrome prints) will also be maintained and supported by an index and site plan of shot locations.
- 4.3 All archaeological features identified during the works should be recorded on a site plan at an appropriate scale. Archaeological features located should be cleaned, recorded and investigated to satisfy the objectives of the archaeological watching brief. Detailed plans and sections of excavated features should be made at an appropriate scale.
- 4.4 If finds or environmental samples are located of a significance beyond that which might have been anticipated before the development began, development shall cease where they might be disturbed in order that provision for their adequate recording or preservation may be made in consultation with the LPA or personnel nominated by them. Contingency provisions (both time and costs) should be made within the programme of work for this.
- 4.5 The developer shall afford access to the development site for the purposes of archaeological monitoring to officers of English Heritage and the LPA or personnel nominated by them at all reasonable times upon compliance with the requirements of health and safety.
- 4.6 The developer shall give the LPA or personnel nominated by them at least ten days' notice in writing of the commencement of the development, and shall keep them informed of the progress of the watching brief during the period in which it is carried out.
- 4.7 The project archive shall be compiled in accordance with the guidelines contained in *Guidelines for the Preparation of Excavation Archives for Long-term Storage* (UKIC, 1990), and *Standards in the Museum Care of Archaeological Collections* (Museum and Galleries Commission, 1992)
- 4.8 The archaeological contractor should agree all on-site working practices with the developer at the earliest opportunity and identify those elements of the construction programme requiring time for recording.
- 4.9 The archaeological contractors should comply with all Health and Safety requirements stipulated by the Main Contractor, ensure that their staff wear the correct PPE (Personal Protective Equipment) at all times and that a Risk Assessment for the work is prepared in advance and reviewed at regular intervals.
- 4.10 The project should also attempt to place the project findings into their historical and geographical context through cartographic and documentary research.
- 4.11 The project should be conducted by an archaeological organisation working in accordance with the By-laws of the Institute of Field Archaeologists. Archaeologists working on the project should not attempt tasks outside of their areas of competence.
- 4.12 The project should be conducted by an archaeological organisation working in accordance with the By-laws of the Institute of Field Archaeologists. Archaeologists working on the project should not attempt tasks outside of their areas of competence.

5. PRESENTATION OF RESULTS AND DEPOSITION OF ARCHIVE

- 5.1 A report on the results obtained should be submitted to the Local Planning Authority and personnel nominated by them within 8 weeks of the completion of site work. This should include consideration of:
1. non-technical summary
 2. the aims and methods adopted in the course of the recording
 3. the nature, location, extent, date, significance and quality of any archaeological and environmental material uncovered
 4. the anticipated degree of survival of archaeological deposits and structures on the site not disturbed by development - surviving areas of archaeological potential should be indicated on the site plan
 5. conclusions based upon an interpretation of the findings of the watching brief taking into consideration the wider archaeological and historic context
 6. appropriate illustrative material including maps, plans, sections, and drawings at an appropriate scale and photographs. All plans, sections, etc., created during the watching brief will be related to Ordnance Survey datum levels and their relation to the National Grid referencing system shall be made clear.
 7. description of the archive and the location for its long-term deposition
- 5.2 If significant remains are recorded during the project, then it may be necessary to undertake a full programme of analysis and publication in accordance with the guidelines contained in English Heritage's *Management of Archaeological Projects 2*. If this is the case, then a timetable and programme of work for this aspect of the project will need to be submitted to the Local Planning Authority for agreement.
- 5.3 The post excavation work shall be carried out immediately on completion of site investigations. The site archive shall be prepared in accordance with established professional guidelines.
- 5.4 The written and illustrated report of the watching brief shall be copied to:
- i) the client
 - ii) the County Council
 - iii) the National Monuments Record
- 5.5 The copy of the report sent to the County Council should be accompanied by a completed copy of the Activity and Source Submission Form (see appendix 1).
- 5.6 The archive and finds, including a copy of the watching brief report, shall be deposited at an appropriate museum, such as the Potteries Museum and Art Gallery at Hanley, Stoke-on-Trent. The museum guidelines regarding the acceptance of such material should be taken into account. The recipient museum shall be informed in advance of the date when the watching brief is to commence.
- 5.7 The written report will become publicly accessible, as part of the Staffordshire Sites and Monuments Record, within six months of completion. The AFC shall also submit a short summary report for inclusion in the next edition of the journal *West Midlands Archaeology* within 6 months of the completion of the fieldwork.

If you wish to comment on the contents of this brief or require additional information, then please contact Stephen Dean at the address below:

Environmental Planning Unit

Staffordshire County Council
Development Services Dept,
Riverway, Stafford ST16 3TJ

Tel. (01785) 277290 - Fax (01785) 277364

Appendix 1.

Staffordshire County Council Sites and Monuments Record

Activity and Source Submission Form.

Submission date -

Site Activity or Event

Name of **event** (eg. Watching Brief at The Blue Boar, Ipstones.)

Location of **event** (eg. The Blue Boar P.H. Overton Lane, Ipstones.)

NGR

Civil Parish

Brief Description of **event** (eg. Watching brief during cellar alterations and renovation, prior to conversion to residential use.)

“Activity Type(s)” (highlight as appropriate) *Air Photography / Evaluation-trial excavation / Field Walking / Measured survey-drawing / Geophysical survey / Archaeological excavation-full / Archaeological excavation-part / Field survey / Photogrammetric survey / Rectified photo survey / Photographic record / AP interpretation / Salvage-rescue excavation / Watching brief / Environmental sampling / Post-excavation analysis / Documentary research*

Commencement date (eg. 01-May-1978)

Completion date (eg. 02-Sept-1983)

Organisation or contractor details (organisation name, address, telephone, e-mail etc.)

Report Details

Date

Type of document (highlight as appropriate) *Written / Photographic / Cartographic / Drawn*

Title

Author(s)

Brief summary of contents

Brief description of document (eg. Written text with illustrations, bibliography and references. Appendices dealing with environmental sampling. 32 pages. etc.)

Cross references to Staffordshire SMR (if applicable please list Primary record numbers)