

SHIRES HOUSE
Bythesea Road
Trowbridge

Wiltshire

An archaeological watching brief report

December 2007

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SHIRES HOUSE
Bythesea Road
Trowbridge

Wiltshire

An archaeological watching brief report

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Summary (non-technical)

This report has been commissioned by CNP Building and Project Consultants in order to record and assess the results of a watching brief carried out at Shires House, Bythesea Road, Trowbridge, Wiltshire.

Work on geotechnical trial pits and a borehole was monitored between 11th and 12th November 2007. A standing building assessment was also undertaken on the 1st November 2007

In total, five separate interventions (geotechnical trial pits) and one borehole were monitored. These were excavated for the purposes of assessing the underlying geology and ground conditions in order to inform the design of the foundations for the proposed development. These have been numbered TP1-5 consecutively, and BH1.

Borehole 1 and Trial Pit 2 produced geological material only. Trial Pits 1, 4 and 5 also included unstratified garden soils of recent date and were of very limited archaeological interest.

The principal object of interest was the concentration of wood fragments found in Trial Pit 3. Their location in the top of the clay at a depth of some 1.6m, and beneath an apparently geological deposit, indicates a very early date. As such they would have little archaeological interest. It is suggested that further examination of a retrieved section of this wood by a timber specialist may shed further light on this artefact.

No remains of the 19th-century foundry were encountered, either as walls or as usage/waste deposits or artefacts, within the trial pits.

The standing building assessment looked at 15 buildings on the site. Eleven of the buildings will require some form of soft strip under archaeological guidance to enable further recording of the interiors. Seven buildings have been identified as requiring the removal of some of the internal wall coverings. This will enable the fabric beneath to be recorded (Buildings 1, 2, 3, 6, 7, 8, and 10).

In Building 2, 3, and 8 the false/suspended ceilings will need to be removed to allow for inspection of the roof. In Building 4 the inspection hatch on the first floor will need to be removed to facilitate the access to enable recording of the timber roof structure.

In Buildings 1, 2, 7 and 10 portions of the floor coverings will need to be removed to enable the recording of the original floors.

No further recording will be required in Buildings 5, 11, 12 and 15.

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1 Introduction

1.1 Site background

The watching brief took place at Shires House, Bythesea Road, Trowbridge, Wiltshire, between 11th and 12th November 2007. The block of land that currently includes Shires House and its car park, the adjacent TVR site, and open garden land, is oriented approximately north-west–south-east, and hereafter will be referred to as ‘the site’. It is bounded to the north-west partly by Stallard Street and partly by properties which front onto Stallard Street, to the north-east by Bythesea Road, to the south-west by a railway cutting, and to the south-east by properties lying between the railway and Bythesea Road (see Fig 1). The Ordnance Survey National Grid reference for the approximate centre of the site is 385310 157760. Modern ground level on the site varies from 38m OD in the north-east corner of the site to 41m OD at the southern end of the site. The site code is WT-SHB07.

A desk based *Archaeological assessment* was previously prepared by MoLAS, which covers the whole area of the site (MoLAS, 2005). A *Standing Building assessment* was also prepared by MoLAS (MoLAS, 2006), in order to identify any buildings of interest which might place constraints upon the potential proposed development. These documents should be referred to for information on the natural geology, archaeological and historical background of the site, and the initial assessment of its archaeological potential.

These documents informed the design (*Method Statement*) for the watching brief which was eventually carried out (MoLAS, 2007).

1.2 The planning and legislative framework

The legislative and planning framework in which the archaeological exercise took place was summarised in the *Archaeological assessment 2005* and in the *Method Statement* which formed the project design for this watching brief (see Section 1.2, MoLAS, 2007).

1.3 Planning background

Following the submission of an outline planning application for the site, the local planning authority has recommended further archaeological work on the site, based on the recommendations of the earlier desk based assessment. This *Archaeological assessment* (MoLAS 2005) recommended the need for further archaeological field work. The works proposed consists of a watching brief on geotechnical trial pits, and a standing building recording exercise (MoLAS 2007, Section 1.4).

The results of this exercise will inform the further elaboration of the construction design and facilitate the elaboration of an appropriate mitigation strategy for any archaeological remains identified.

1.4 Origin and scope of the report

This report was commissioned by CNP Building and Project Consultants on behalf of the client by Parkridge Developments Limited and has been produced by the Museum of London Archaeology Service (MoLAS). The report has been prepared within the terms of the relevant Standard specified by the Institute of Field Archaeologists (IFA, 2001).

The purpose of the watching brief and standing building assessment is twofold. Firstly, the watching brief was undertaken to determine whether archaeological remains or features were present on the site and, if so, to record the nature and extent of such remains. Secondly, the standing building assessment was designed to specify those areas of Shires House, Trowbridge, which should be stripped of internal wall and floor coverings or suspended ceilings in order to facilitate standing building recording and enable a greater understanding of the history of the buildings on the site.

A number of more site-specific research aims and objectives were established in the preceding *Method Statement*, and are outlined in the following section.

The purpose of the present report is to analyse the results of the excavation against the original research aims, and to suggest what further work, including analysis or publication (if any), should now take place.

1.5 Aims and objectives

The following research aims and objectives were established in the *Method Statement* for the watching brief (Section 2.2):

What is the nature and level of natural topography?

Do Bronze Age, Iron Age, and Romano-British remains survive on the site?

What evidence is there for 7th to early 12th-century settlement or activity on the site? In particular, do remains of the route of a contemporary road, crossing the river survive below the existing truncation on the site?

What evidence is there for features associated with the eighteenth-century buildings that fronted onto Stallard Street?

What evidence is there for structures and buildings associated with the iron foundry?

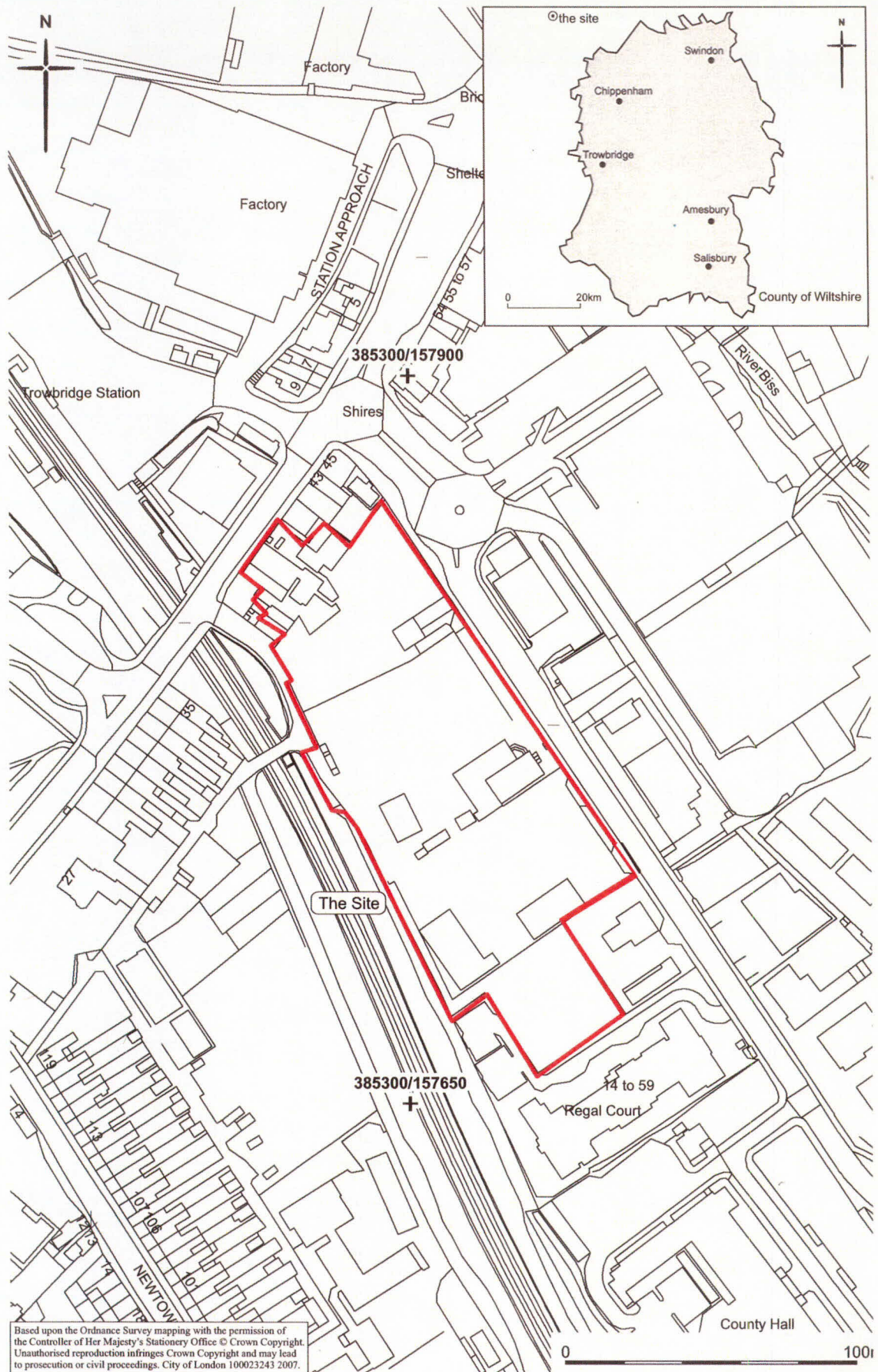


Fig 1 Site location

2 Topographical and historical background

2.1 Topography

The site lies on Cornbrash limestone, which caps the ridge, running south-east–north-west, on which most of Trowbridge lies. The alluvium-filled floodplain of the River Biss bisects the ridge, and in the area of the site the alluvium lies to the east of Bythesea Road. The site lies, therefore, on the eastern edge of the Cornbrash capping, which the BGS mapping indicates has been eroded to the north and east of the site to expose the underlying mudstone of the Forest Marble beds. The surrounding low-lying land consists of the Kellaways Formation mudstone to the north-west of the ridge, and Oxford Clay to the south-east. The ‘earlier’ materials forming the ridge have been thrust up through these ‘later’ deposits.

This topographic situation, on the south-western side of the ‘valley’ of the Biss, is reflected in the ground levels on the site, which overall rise steeply from north-east to south-west, from *c* 38–39m OD to *c* 40–42m OD (GreenHatch Limited dwg no. 8933all_1), although ground levels vary considerably across the site within these limits. Levels also rise more gently from north-west to south-east, from *c* 39–40m OD on Stallard Street to 40–41m OD at the southern end of the site.

A series of seven boreholes were conducted on the open central part of the site (the ‘TVR site’ and the car park of Shires House) for WSP Environmental in 2004 (WSP Environmental Limited, 2004b). These were interpreted as showing modern tarmac or concrete ground surfaces overlying loose to dense sandy gravels of limestone, which in turn overlie natural Oxford Clays and Kellaway Beds (WSP Environmental Limited, 2004b, paras 6.1 & 9.8).

The ‘sandy gravels of limestone’, interpreted as ‘Made Ground’, appear to be either post-medieval and modern ground surfaces and demolition rubble, or Cornbrash, either disturbed or possibly *in situ*. It is likely that the deposits vary considerably across the site, and that in some areas the 19th-century and earlier ground surfaces are sealed by more modern formation levels, and that in others they have been truncated to, or into, the underlying strata by terracing and levelling of the site. Four of the boreholes penetrated into the ‘natural’ clays, the surface of which lay between *c* 0.55 and 0.9m below ground level.

This suggests that archaeological survival may vary considerably across the site.

2.2 Prehistoric

Isolated finds of Early Bronze Age arrowheads have been made at Dursley Road and West Dursley Road, and the earliest phase of activity at the Castle Street/Court Street excavations was of Early to Late Bronze Age date, consisting of field boundaries, post-built structures including a row of six post-holes, as well as two associated pits. Other Late Bronze Age features on that site included a palisade trench and four pits.

At the least this indicates a field/enclosure system and associated remains of agricultural activity, implying settlement in the surrounding area.

The Castle Street/Court Street excavations also produced evidence from the Iron Age, in the form of a four-post structure, dated by a single pot sherd, of a type conventionally interpreted as granaries, and usually found in close proximity to occupation sites. Whilst this may have been an isolated structure, it is quite possible that it represents the only surviving element of a small settlement otherwise truncated by Saxon, medieval, and particularly post-medieval activity.

2.3 Roman

Romano-British finds from the area are limited to a ditch with abraded Romano-British pottery in its fill from Castle Street/Court Street, and a coin of AD 238–244 found at the Bradley Road Post Office.

2.4 Saxon and early medieval

The first major evidence for occupation in Trowbridge starts with a 7th-century settlement of sunken featured buildings and post-built structures excavated at the Castle Street/Court Street site, an area which was probably intermittently occupied later in the Saxon period, finally emerging as a manorial complex and chapel by the 10th century.

This settlement was on the opposite side of the 'valley' of the River Biss from the present site, but it has been argued (Rogers 1984, 11; McMahon 2004, 20) that there was a road along the ridge, which at that time probably ran adjacent to the settlement, before crossing the river by a 'tree-bridge' which later gave its name to the settlement. If so, the road or track would probably have run across the present site as it climbed onto the higher ground.

At the time of the Domesday survey of 1086, the manor (referred to as 'Straburg'), included at least one mill and was held by one Bitric, whose father had held it before 1066. The manorial settlement continued in use into the early 12th century.

2.5 Later Medieval

After 1086 Bitric's property passed first to the large landowner Edward of Salisbury, and then to Humphrey De Bohunne (or Bohun). The earlier settlement was at least partly replaced with a motte and bailey castle built *c* 1139, when it is first mentioned as being fortified by De Bohunne. The earlier chapel and graveyard later went out of use when the castle defences expanded in the 12th century (McMahon 2004, 9), and the later medieval settlement grew up around the castle defences, with a market being granted in 1200, and two mills being recorded by 1331.

The location of the castle required the road crossing the river to be diverted to the north, roughly its modern route (McMahon 2004, 20). Any road or track across the present site would probably have gone out of use at this time. The area of the site was

probably common land in the early post-medieval period, and may also have been so in this period.

The town continued to grow on the eastern side of the Biss in the medieval period, fuelled by the wool trade from the 14th century, but it is unlikely that a possible settlement at the western end of the bridge extended to the site.

2.6 Post-medieval

Whilst the town continued to expand on the eastern bank of the Biss, mainly as a result of the increasing cloth trade, the area of the site was probably open land until the 19th century, with the exception of the corridor along what is now Stallard Street. The earliest detailed map of the area available is Andrews' and Dury's survey of 1773, which shows that a row of buildings extended along the southern side of Stallard Street, with gardens to their rear, some of them falling into an area corresponding with the northern edge of the site. It is unclear whether these 18th-century structures were the first buildings on the site, or if there had been earlier buildings in this location.

The land to the rear of these buildings, the majority of the site, remains open land, and is shown as such on 'A Plan of the Mannor of Trowbridge' of 1776, in which it falls within an area described as 'Grass Enox. Enox, ennox, or innox was a term used to describe former common land which had since been enclosed.'¹ Oddly, this plan does not show any buildings along the Stallard Street frontage in the area of the site. Andrews' and Dury's map of 1810, however, shows the same situation on the site as in 1773.

The first recorded buildings on the site south of Stallard Street were those of a small iron foundry belonging to the much larger concern of the Haden family. George Haden had erected one of the early steam engines in a Trowbridge factory in 1814, and subsequently set up his own company making and repairing engines, which became specialised in the provision of heating, kitchen, and laundry equipment for large buildings and institutions, notably those for Windsor Castle. The original premises of George and James Haden were on Silver Street, east of the river, but in c 1825 they opened Haden and Woodfin's foundry on the present site (Rogers 1984, 115–6). The foundry, later known as St George's, appears to have started as a very small concern: the tithe map of 1838 shows a single small building (no. 266). Other parts of the site fall into land still described as ennox in the schedule accompanying the tithe map (nos 260 & 263), and gardens (no. 265). The land for plots 260 to 263 is described as being owned by Samuel Bythesea, a local clothier, and occupied by Joseph Snook.

In 1848 the Wilts., Somerset and Weymouth Railway Company opened the line from Thingley Junction to Westbury (VCH Wilts, Vol 7, 126), and this is depicted running in a cutting to the west of the site on the Ordnance Survey map of 1888. During the preceding fifty years the area had been increasingly built upon, and in particular the foundry had expanded from the initial single building into a much larger complex, which is shown in greater detail in the 1:500 map of the preceding year. As well as the

¹ Robert Pearson, Wilts. Record Office, pers comm.

factory buildings, the site includes its own small gasometer, cranes, a polygonal chimney, and in the south-western corner some form of water tank. East of the crane is a building oriented north-west–south-east, linking the two main blocks of buildings. This building, although significantly altered, survives on the site and is constructed of squared blocks, generally built to courses.²

Bythesea Road was laid out in 1895 (Rogers 1984, 120), and is shown on the Ordnance Survey map of 1901. By that time the foundry had expanded both to the east of the site, on the opposite side of Bythesea Road, and in the strip of land between that road and the mid 19th-century factory. The open land south of the factory is described as allotment gardens.

In the first decade of the 20th century the factory buildings continued to expand, notably filling in most of the open area in the north-east of the site, adjacent to Bythesea Road. This is depicted on the Ordnance Survey map of 1912, although the foundry had closed in 1910, and includes the surviving building adjacent to Bythesea Road.³ In 1913 the premises were taken over by Wiltshire United Dairies, later Unigate, and the buildings are labelled as a butter factory on the Ordnance Survey map of 1924. A fire in 1985 caused extensive damage to the buildings, and only a few of the original buildings remain as part of the current offices (McMahon 2004, 26; the site of the foundry forms component 32 of this survey of the urban archaeology of Trowbridge).

The buildings on the site south of Shires House all appear to post-date the 1924 survey, and some the 1979 map.

² Lansdown *et al* (caption to figs 43 & 44) state that this building dates to the 1820s, but as it does not appear on the tithe map of 1838, it must date to some point between 1838 and 1887.

³ Lansdown *et al* (caption to figs 43 & 44) indicate that this building dates to the late 19th century, but as it does not appear on the Ordnance Survey map of 1901, it must have been constructed between that date and 1912.

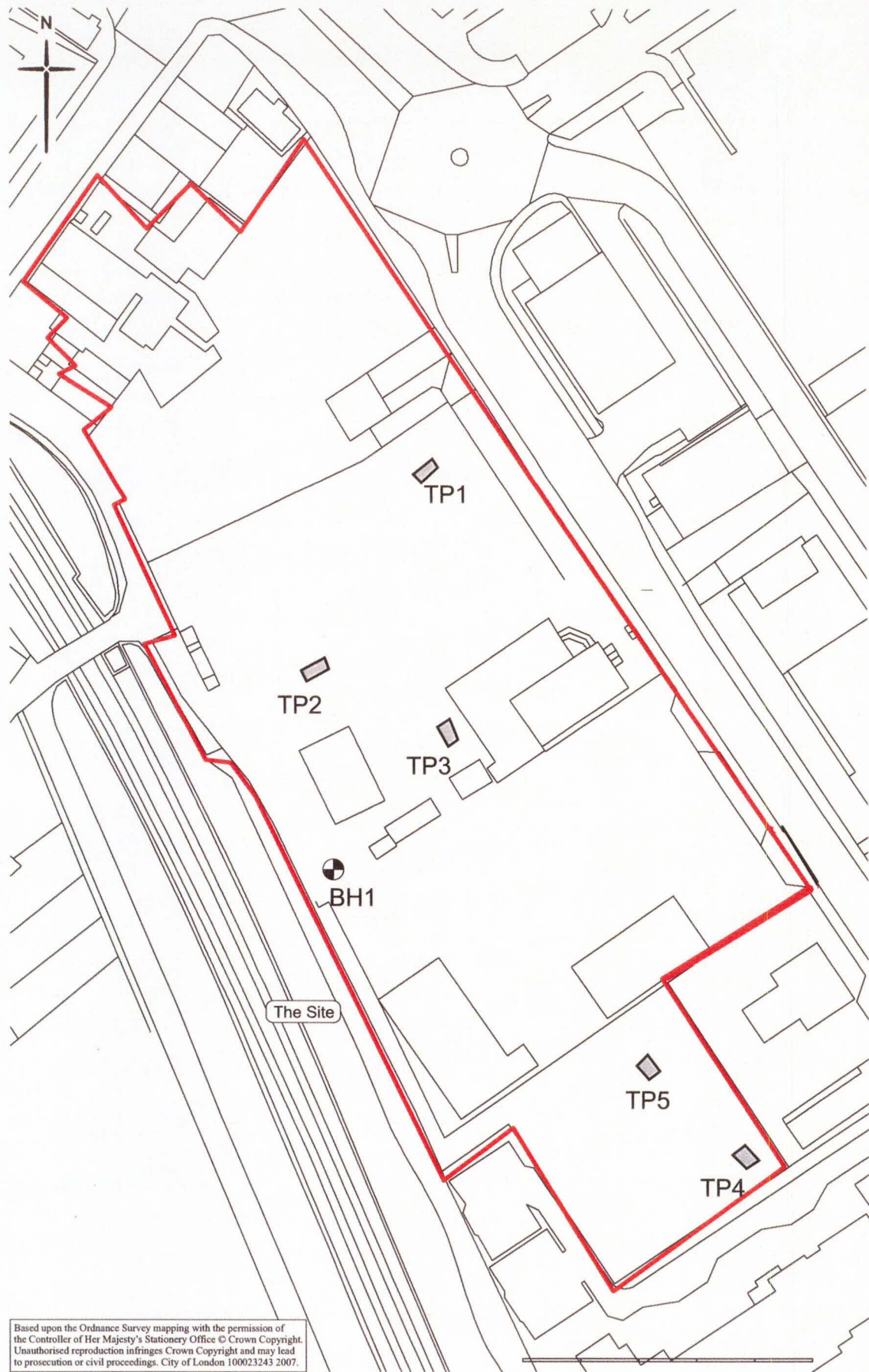


Fig 2 Location of trial pits and borehole

3 The watching brief

3.1 Methodology

All archaeological excavation and recording during the watching brief was done in accordance with the *Method Statement* (MoLAS, 2007) and the MoLAS Archaeological Site Manual (MoLAS, 1994).

Geotechnical trial pits were excavated by machine by the contractors, and monitored by a senior archaeologist from MoLAS.

The locations of the areas of excavation were recorded by offsetting from adjacent standing walls and plotted on to an Ordnance Survey plan of the site.

The heights of observations and/or archaeological remains were recorded relative to the modern ground surface. Ordnance Datum levels were provided on a topographical survey of the site (Drg No. 8933all_1 by Green Hatch Ltd, March 2005).

Where relevant, sections were drawn at a scale of 1:20; numbered contexts were allocated where appropriate.

The site has produced: 1 test pit location plan; 5 test pit record sheets, 5 x 1:20 section drawings; 181 photographs.

The site finds and records can be found under the site code WT-SHB07 in the MoL archive. All records will be transferred to the Trowbridge Museum on completion of this project.

3.2 Results of the watching brief

In total, five separate interventions (trial pits) and one borehole were monitored. These were excavated for the purposes of assessing the underlying geology and ground conditions in order to inform the design of the foundations for the proposed development. These have been numbered TP1-5 consecutively, and BH1. There follows a brief description of the archaeological deposits as recorded.

For all trench locations see Fig 2.

<i>Watching Brief Trial Pit 1</i>	
Location	NE corner of Shires House car park
Dimensions	2m x 0.60m
Modern ground level/top of slab	c 40.92m OD
Base of modern fill/slab	c 40.27m OD
Depth of archaeological deposits seen	0.55m
Level of base of deposits observed	c 39.72 m OD
Natural observed	c 39.72m OD

Natural deposits comprising a bed of hard off-white limestone was revealed at the base of the trial pit at c 39.17m OD. Overlying this was a layer of hard light-beige limestone mixed with stiff light yellow-brown clay 0.55m thick, interpreted as a natural deposit, the surface of which was at c 39.72m OD. Above this was banded and mixed dark grey-brown loamy silt with frequent moderate fragments of limestone 0.55m thick. This was capped by a modern asphalt and concrete overburden 0.65m thick. The modern ground surface was recorded at c 40.92m OD.

No archaeological significant features or finds were noted in this trial pit.

<i>Watching Brief Trial Pit 2</i>	
Location	W end of Shires House car park
Dimensions	2m x 0.60m
Modern ground level/top of slab	c 41.42m OD
Base of modern fill/slab	c 40.87m OD
Depth of archaeological deposits seen	N/A
Level of base of deposits observed	N/A
Natural observed	c 40.87m OD

Natural deposits comprising of stiff light greenish-grey clay were observed at a depth of between 1.80-3.30m below the modern ground surface (c 38.12m OD to c 39.72m OD). This was overlain by a bed of natural off-white limestone 0.30m thick. Above this was a natural layer comprising moderate-sized fragments of limestone set in a matrix of sandy clay 0.45m thick. This was covered by a layer of light yellow-brown friable sandy clay (orange-red at surface, possibly iron-staining) 0.55m thick. Above this was 0.5m thick layer of brick rubble make up capped by an asphalt layer. The surface of the tarmac was recorded at c 41.42m OD.

No archaeological significant features or finds were noted in this trial pit.



Fig 3 South facing section of Trial Pit 1

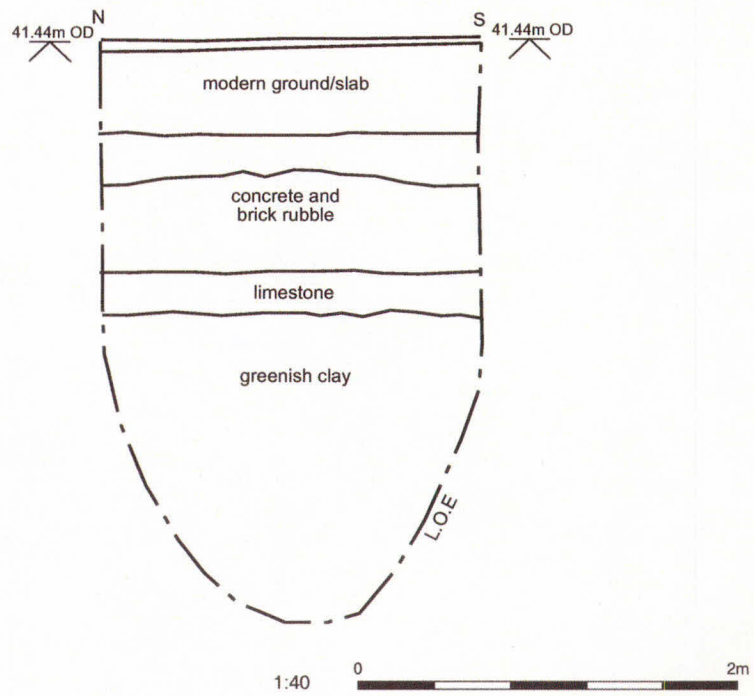


Fig 4 South-east facing section of Trial Pit 2

<i>Watching Brief Trial Pit 3</i>	
Location	S end of Shires House car park
Dimensions	2m x 0.60m
Modern ground level/top of slab	c 41.44m OD
Base of modern fill/slab	c 40.94m OD
Depth of archaeological deposits seen	N/A
Level of base of deposits observed	N/A
Natural observed	c 40.94m OD

Natural deposits comprising of a stiff light were observed at a depth of between 1.55-3.05m below the modern ground surface (c 38.39m OD to c 39.89m OD). At the northern end of the test-pit, was a fairly densely packed concentration of fragments of semi-petrified wood, dark in colour and probably oak. The fragments were a flattened oval in cross-section, probably as a result of pressure from above. Some of the fragments were quite large, up to 135mm long x 65mm wide. Other fragments had longitudinal grooves on both flattened surfaces, and ends which were smooth and flat. These are thought to be the remnants of a tree preserved in the natural deposits.

Overlying the greenish clay was a bed of hard very light greenish-grey limestone 0.20m thick. This was covered by a layer of concrete and brick rubble 0.50m thick. The modern ground surface at this point was recorded at c 41.44m OD.

No archaeological significant features or finds were noted in this trial pit.

<i>Watching Brief Trial Pit 4</i>	
Location	S end of open ground area
Dimensions	2m x 0.60m
Modern ground level/top of slab	c 41.62m OD
Base of modern fill/slab	c 40.62m OD
Depth of archaeological deposits seen	N/A
Level of base of deposits observed	N/A
Natural observed	c 40.62m OD

Located in the open garden area at the southern end of the site this trial pit revealed natural deposits comprising a bed of very compact limestone at a depth of c 40.02m OD. This was overlain by a layer of highly compacted natural flat fragments of off-white limestone 0.60m thick. This in turn was covered by up to a metre of brown homogeneous loamy soil, with occasional inclusions of modern brick fragments. This was interpreted as a humic/horticultural soil horizon. The ground surface was recorded at, c 41.62m OD.

No archaeological significant features or finds were noted in this trial pit.

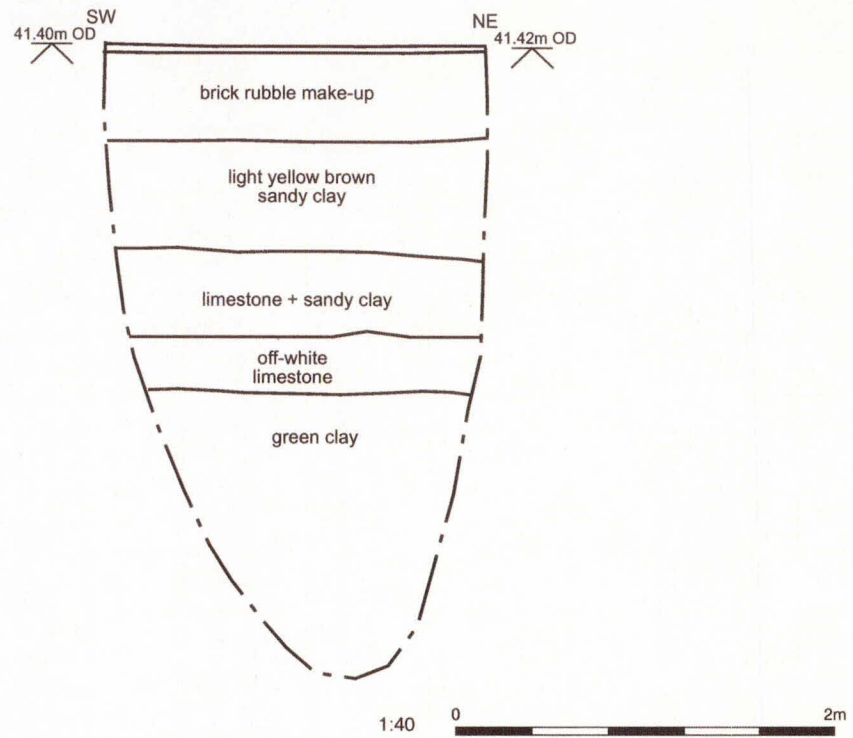


Fig 5 West facing section of Trial Pit 3

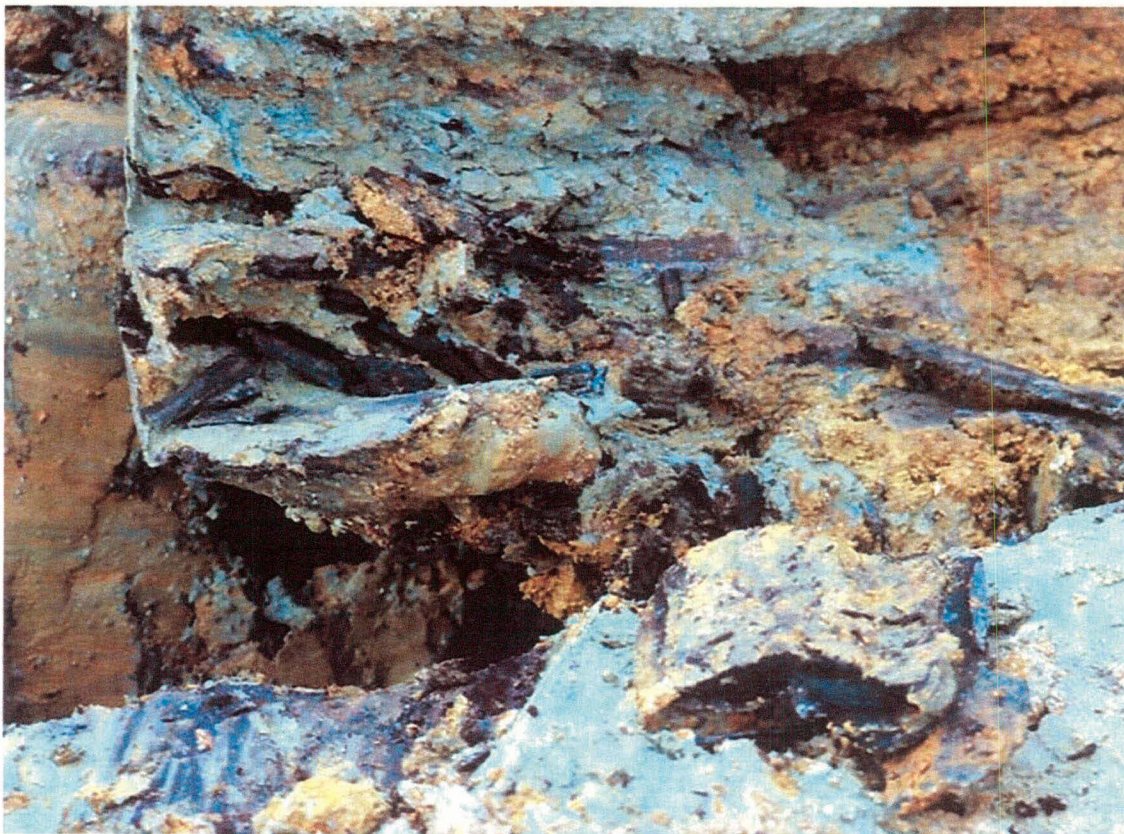


Fig 6 Wood fragments in situ in Trial Pit 3

<i>Watching Brief Trial Pit 5</i>	
Location	N end of open ground area
Dimensions	2m x 0.60m
Modern ground level/top of slab	c 41.49m OD
Base of modern fill/slab	c 41.14m OD
Depth of archaeological deposits seen	N/A
Level of base of deposits observed	N/A
Natural observed	c 41.14m OD

Trial Pit 5 was located at the northern end of the open garden area. The trial pit revealed natural deposits comprising a bed of very compact limestone in a clay matrix at a depth of c 40.54m OD. This was overlain by a layer of soft and moist but friable light yellow-brown sandy clay 0.60m thick. This in turn was capped by a layer of mid brown silty clay 0.35m thick, which was identified as a topsoil/garden soil. The ground surface was recorded at, c 41.49m OD.

No archaeological significant features or finds were noted in this trial pit.

<i>Watching Brief Borehole 1</i>	
Location	SW corner of Shires House car park
Dimensions	0.10m diameter
Modern ground level/top of slab	c 41.94m OD
Base of modern fill/slab	c 41.74m OD
Depth of archaeological deposits seen	N/A
Level of base of deposits observed	N/A
Natural observed	c 41.74m OD

During the course of the watching brief on the geotechnical trial pits the opportunity arose to monitor the drilling of an exploratory borehole. The borehole was located at the western edge of the site in the south-west corner of Shires House car park.

The borehole was monitored to a depth of 10m below the modern ground surface (c 31.94m OD). The earliest deposits noted comprised a very stiff light bluish-grey clay with bands of mudstone near the base 7m thick. Above this was a deposit comprising fragments of limestone in a soft clay matrix 1.0m thick. This was covered by a deposit, 0.60m thick, comprising a homogeneous mixed sandy clay with angular fragments of off-white limestone <45mm diameter. Over this was a deposit of natural yellow-brown stiff slightly sandy clay 1.10m thick. This was in turn overlain by a layer of modern rubble make up 0.20m thick, which was capped by a thin layer of asphalt. The modern ground surface was recorded at c 41.94m OD.

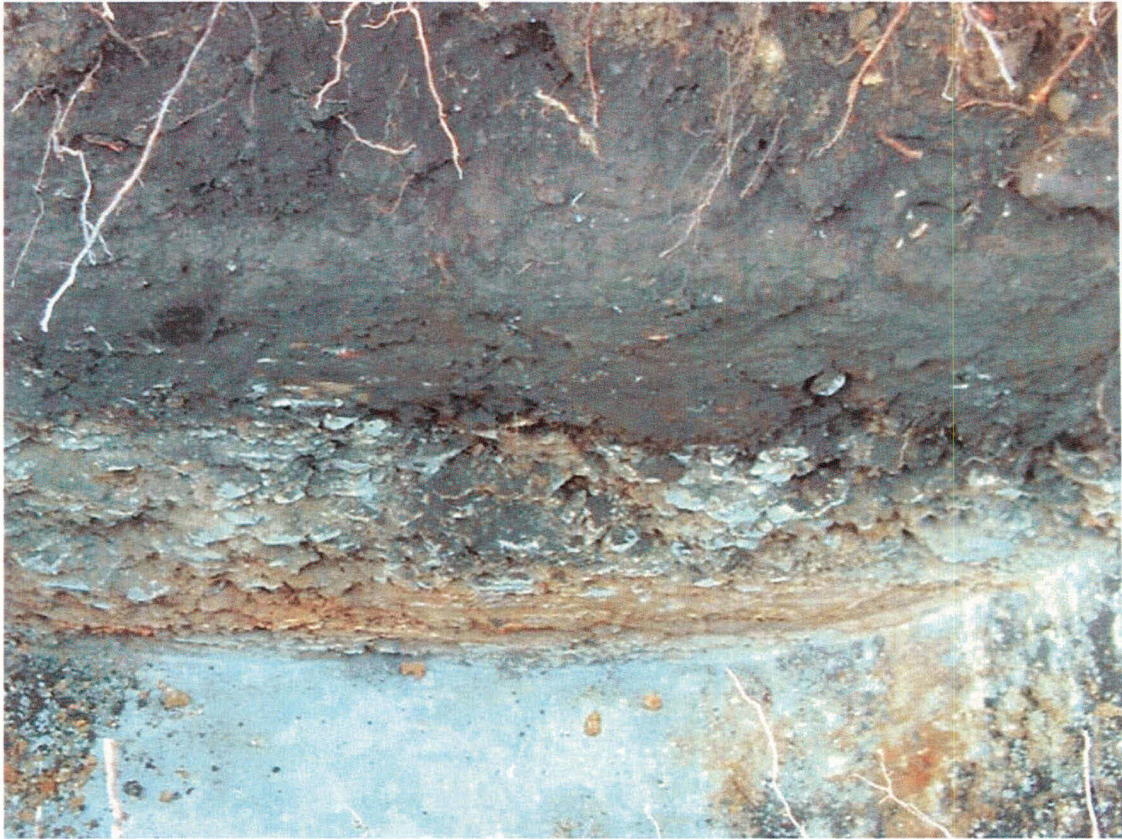


Fig 7 West facing section of Trial Pit 4

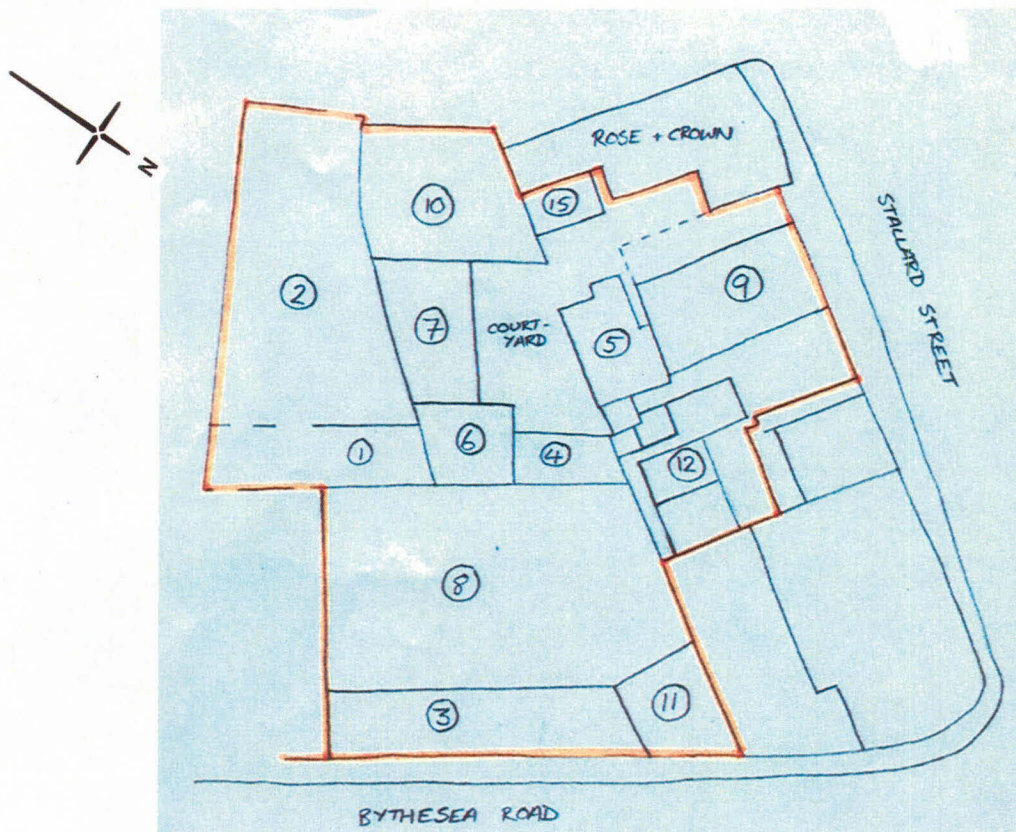


Fig 8 Schematic plan of the buildings on the site

3.3 Results of the standing building assessment

The aim of the assessment is to specify those areas of Shires House, Trowbridge, which should be stripped of internal wall and floor coverings or suspended ceilings in order to facilitate standing building recording and enable a greater understanding of the history of the buildings on the site. Following the soft strip, standing building recording can take place; this will involve photography and some measured plans and elevations of the interiors and exteriors of the buildings on the site. These recommendations are made following a site visit on 1st November 2007.

3.3.1 Building 1

Constructed of dressed stone blocks in rough courses, with later windows inserted on the ground and first floors; the jambs are constructed of brick. The OS map of 1887 suggests that the building originally faced west, out onto a courtyard accessed from the lane leading south from Stallard Street. This courtyard was filled c1900 by the construction of the Dressing Shed. At this date, additional windows may have been introduced to the east-facing façade. Door and window opening may have been blocked or introduced to the west-facing façade at this time.

Internal wall coverings should be removed from the interior of Building 1, as well as from adjacent buildings 2, 6 and 8 in order to record the fabric of the walls and inspect them for evidence of blocked door and window openings, former internal partition walls and staircases. Floor coverings on the ground floor should be removed in order to allow for inspection of floor surfaces, and the false ceiling visible on the 1st floor concealing the roof structure should also be removed.

3.3.2 Building 2

Building 2 was constructed c1900 as the Dressing Shed, or Fettling Shop, where sand was removed from iron castings by hammering, tumbling or shot blasting. The building has been much altered with the insertion of double glazed windows to the south-facing façade, and a new roof covering has been added.

The soft strip should focus on removing suspended ceilings from the interior of the building to facilitate inspection of the roof, which may contain original elements of the steel truss frame. Internal wall and floor coverings, and those in adjacent buildings 7 and 10 should also be removed in order to see evidence for the internal division of space and former use of the building, and to investigate the several changes of level within the building.

3.3.3 Buildings 3 and 8

Buildings 3 and 8 originally comprised one single warehouse, constructed c1900. Plans deposited with the Wiltshire Records Office suggest that the building may have been constructed in two phases, with the initial construction consisting of the eastern two bays, nearest Bythesea Road, with the construction of the western two bays following shortly after. The plans suggest that the eastern façade facing Bythesea Road may predate the construction of the warehouse in 1900. The warehouse was built with a saw-tooth pitched roof in four bays, with only the original roof of the eastern bay now remaining. The other three pitched roofs have been replaced by a flat roof.

False ceilings should be removed in order to allow for inspection of the roof, which may contain some original elements. The internal faces of all the external walls should be stripped to inspect them for evidence of earlier blocked door and window openings.

3.3.4 Building 4

A structure with a similar footprint to Building 4 is shown on the OS map of 1887; the present building may date to the late 19th century, although it has been significantly altered with larger windows on the ground floor and dormer windows on the 1st floor facing east onto the courtyard.

The inspection hatch in the 1st floor ceiling should be removed to facilitate full inspection of the roof and the internal walls on the ground and 1st floors stripped to record any blocked windows and door openings.

3.3.5 Building 6

A structure with a similar footprint to Building 6 is visible on the OS map of 1887, and originally belonged to a separate commercial concern. It was one of several buildings arranged around a courtyard which may have belonged to the Rose and Crown public house, or to another business on Stallard Street.

The suspended ceiling on the 1st floor should be removed in order to allow for examination of the timber roof structure, and the internal elevations should be stripped of wall coverings, in particular to examine the walls for evidence of the boundary wall which would have separated the foundry complex from the yard associated with the Rose and Crown public house.

3.3.6 Buildings 5, 9, 11, 12 and 15

The structure of the buildings can be adequately understood without the need for further stripping.

4 Potential of archaeology

4.1 Original research aims

What is the nature and level of natural topography?

- The natural deposits on the site comprise a stiff greenish grey clay, overlain in places by densely compact limestone, which in turn is overlain by a light yellow-brown (or beige) sandy clay. The height of the natural deposits reflect the general slope of the site from north to south and varies between c 39.72m OD and c 41.74m OD, being 0.20m – 1.20m below the modern ground surface. The natural deposits appear to be closer to the surface in the centre of the site, becoming deeper to the south and east.

Do Bronze Age, Iron Age, and Romano-British remains survive on the site?

- No archaeological artefacts or features relating to these periods were noted during the course of the watching brief.

What evidence is there for 7th to early 12th-century settlement or activity on the site? In particular, do remains of the route of a contemporary road, crossing the river survive below the existing truncation on the site?

- No settlement activity or evidence for a roadway was noted.

What evidence is there for features associated with the eighteenth-century buildings that fronted onto Stallard Street?

- No evidence for earlier features associated with the buildings on Stallard Street were noted.

What evidence is there for structures and buildings associated with the iron foundry?

- Buildings associated with the foundry still stand on the site and will be subject to further standing building recording following a soft strip on the site. No evidence of foundry structures were noted in the trial pits, although iron staining of deposits noted in Trial Pit 2 may be the result of industrial processes on site.

4.2 New research aims

No new research aims are required.

4.3 Significance of the data

No archaeological remains were noted during the watching brief on the geotechnical trial pits.

5 Publication and archiving

Information on the results of the geotechnical watching brief will be made publicly available by means of a database in digital form, to permit inclusion of the site data in any future academic researches into the development of Trowbridge.

The site archive containing original records and finds will be stored in accordance with the terms of the *Method Statement* (MoLAS, 2007) with the Trowbridge Museum 12 months of the completion of the project.

In view of the limited potential of the material (Sections 4) and the relatively limited significance of the data (Section 4.3) it is suggested that a short note on the results of the watching brief should appear in the round up of the local archaeological fieldwork of Wiltshire, such as *CBA Wessex Archaeological News*.

6 Conclusions

Borehole 1 and Test pit 2 produced geological material only. Trial Pits 1, 4 and 5 also included unstratified garden soils of recent date and were of very limited archaeological interest.

The principal object of interest was the concentration of wood fragments found in Trial Pit 3. Their location in the top of the clay at a depth of some 1.6m, and beneath an apparently geological deposit, indicates a very early date. As such they would have little archaeological interest. It is suggested that further examination of a retrieved section of this wood by a wood specialist may shed further light on this artefact.

No remains of the 19th-century foundry were encountered, either as walls or as usage/waste deposits or artefacts.

The frontage of Shires House has been recorded by Buildings Archaeologists from the Museum of London Archaeology Service. This will be included in a following report on the standing building survey, which will be carried out following the soft strip of the properties on the site.

7 Acknowledgements

The author would like to thank the following for their contributions and help in producing this report: Justin Rookard of CNP Building and Project Consultants for commissioning this report.

8 Bibliography

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9 NMR OASIS archaeological report form

Project details

Project name Shires House, Trowbridge

Short description of the project Work on geotechnical trial pits and a borehole was monitored between 11th and 12th November 2007. A standing building assessment, which looked at 15 buildings on the site, was also undertaken on the 1st November 2007. In total, five geotechnical trial pits and one borehole were monitored. Borehole 1 and Trial Pit 2 produced geological material only. Trial Pits 1, 4 and 5 also included unstratified garden soils of recent date and were of very limited archaeological interest. The principal object of interest was the concentration of wood fragments found in Trial Pit 3. Their location in the top of the clay at a depth of some 1.6m, and beneath an apparently geological deposit, indicates a very early date. No remains of the 19th-century foundry were encountered, either as walls or as usage/waste deposits or artefacts, within the trial pits.

Project dates Start: 11-11-2007 End: 12-11-2007

Previous/future work No / Yes

Any associated project reference codes WT-SHB07 - Sitecode

Type of project Field evaluation

Site status None

Current Land use Industry and Commerce 2 - Offices

Monument type DRESSING SHED Post Medieval

Monument type ALE STORE Post Medieval

Monument type WAREHOUSE Post Medieval

Methods & techniques 'Survey/Recording Of Fabric/Structure', 'Test Pits'

Development type Not recorded

Prompt Voluntary/self-interest

Position in the planning process Pre-application

Project location

Country England

Site location WILTSHIRE WEST WILTSHIRE TROWBRIDGE Shires House, Bythesea Road, Trowbridge

Postcode BA14 8

Study area 13848.00 Square metres

Site coordinates ST 85291 57852 51.3190799641 -2.211092056050 51 19 08 N
002 12 39 W Point

Site coordinates ST 85242 57831 51.3188898474 -2.2117943909 51 19 08 N 002
12 42 W Point

Site coordinates ST 85315 57678 51.3175158501 -2.210740459530 51 19 03 N
002 12 38 W Point

Site coordinates ST 85377 57728 51.3179670840 -2.209852772260 51 19 04 N
002 12 35 W Point

Height OD Min: 39.72m Max: 41.74m

Project creators

Name of Organisation MoLAS

Project brief originator MoLAS project manager

Project design originator MoLAS

Project director/manager Stewart Hoad

Project supervisor Dick Bluer

Type of sponsor/funding body Parkridge Developments Limited

Name of sponsor/funding body Parkridge Developments Limited

Project archives

Physical Archive Exists? No

Physical Archive recipient Wiltshire County Council Museum Service

Digital Archive recipient Wiltshire County Council Museum Service

Digital Contents 'none'

Digital Media available 'GIS','Images raster / digital photography','Text'

Paper Archive recipient Wiltshire County Council Museum Service

Paper Contents 'none'

Paper Media available 'Context sheet','Notebook - Excavation',' Research',' General Notes','Plan','Section'

Project bibliography 1

Publication type Grey literature (unpublished document/manuscript)

Title Shires House, Bythesea Road, Trowbridge Wiltshire A report on the watching brief and the standing building assessment

Author(s)/Editor(s) Bluer, D.

Date 2007

Issuer or publisher MoLAS

Place of issue or
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