



Northamptonshire Archaeology

Archaeological field evaluation on land at
Duns Lane, Leicester
March 2011



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Report 11/82

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OASIS report form

PROJECT DETAILS	
Project name	Duns Lane, Leicester
Short description	Northamptonshire Archaeology carried out an archaeological trial trench evaluation comprising two trenches on land at Duns Lane, Leicester. The evaluation revealed a significant depth of made ground probably associated with the development of the site during the second half of the 19th century. A wall, likely to be a boundary wall associated with the Providence Foundry which once occupied the northern part of the development area, was also encountered.
Project type	Trial trench evaluation
Site status	None
Previous work	Desk-Based Assessment (Hunt 2010)
Current land use	Disused
Future work	Unknown
Monument type/ period	Post-medieval
Significant finds	None
PROJECT LOCATION	
County	Leicestershire
Site address	Duns Lane, Leicester
OS Easting & Northing	4580 3041
Area	0.5ha
Height aOD	56m
PROJECT CREATORS	
Organisation	Northamptonshire Archaeology (NA)
Project brief originator	Leicester City Archaeologist
Project Design originator	RPS
Director/Supervisor	Tony Walsh
Project Manager	Tony Walsh (NA), Dan Slatcher (RPS)
Sponsor or funding body	De Montford University
PROJECT DATE	
Start date	17/3/11
End date	21/3/11
ARCHIVES	
Archive location	Y.A1.2011
Archive contents	Pottery, clay pipe, glass (1 box); site records and related documents (2 large archive boxes); digital photographs, digital report copies
BIBLIOGRAPHY	
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**ARCHAEOLOGICAL FIELD EVALUATION AT
DUNS LANE, LEICESTER
MARCH 2011**

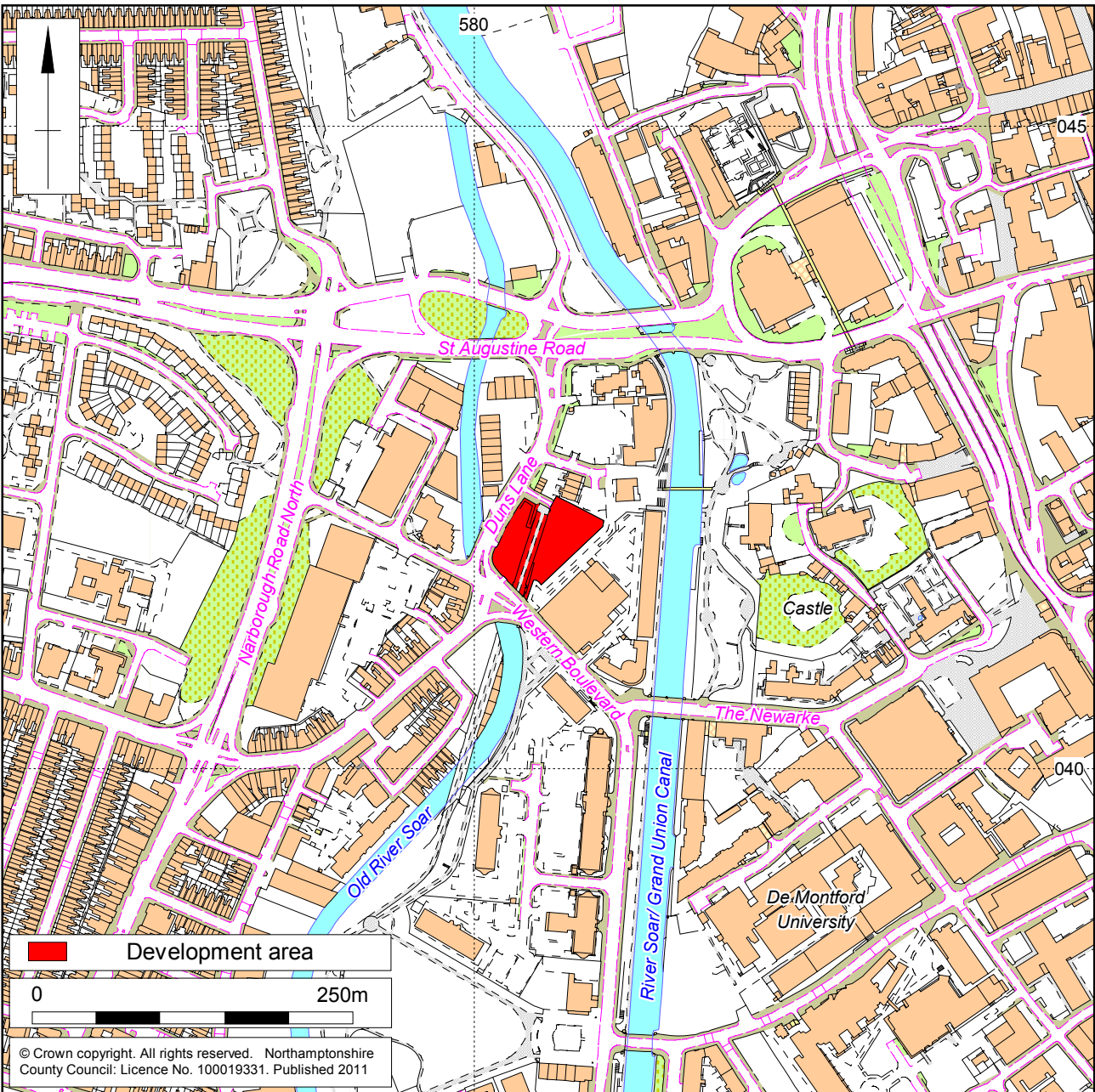
Abstract

Northamptonshire Archaeology carried out an archaeological trial trench evaluation comprising two trenches on land at Duns Lane, Leicester. The evaluation revealed a significant depth of made ground, probably associated with the development of the site during the second half of the 19th century. A wall, likely to be a boundary wall associated with the Providence Foundry which once occupied the northern part of the development area, was also encountered.

1 INTRODUCTION

Northamptonshire Archaeology carried out an archaeological trial trench evaluation, comprising two trenches with a total area of 70m², on land at Duns Lane, Leicester during March 2011 (NGR SK 580 041, Figs 1 and 2). The work was commissioned by RPS Planning and Development, acting on behalf of their clients De Montford University, prior to the construction of a Leisure Centre and ancillary facilities (Planning Application No. 20101619). The evaluation followed an approved Specification produced by RPS (Slatcher 2011).

The accession number issued by the Jewry Wall Museum is Y.A1.201. This report, which presents the results of the evaluation, has been prepared in accordance with Appendix 4 of the English Heritage procedural document Management of Archaeological Projects 2 (EH 1991) and MoRPHE (EH 2006).



Scale 1:5000 (A4)

Site Location Fig 1

2 OBJECTIVES

The general objectives as set out in the Specification were:

“to determine the presence or absence of archaeological remains within those parts of the development area where such remains may be affected by the development and, if such remains are present, to determine their nature, extent, quality and preservation, and to enable an assessment of their relative importance in a local, regional, national or international context” (Slatcher 2010).

Period specific aims were:

Prehistoric: to determine the presence or otherwise of river channels associated with the River Soar which may contain water-logged deposits.

Roman and Anglo-Saxon: to contribute to an understanding the extent and nature of the extra-mural Roman suburb thought to exist in the Westcotes area of the city; and the extensive Roman and Anglo-Saxon cemetery known to exist to the south and west of the development area.

Medieval: to contribute to an understanding of the site’s use during the medieval period

Modern: to assess the impact of previous development on the site’s archaeological resource.

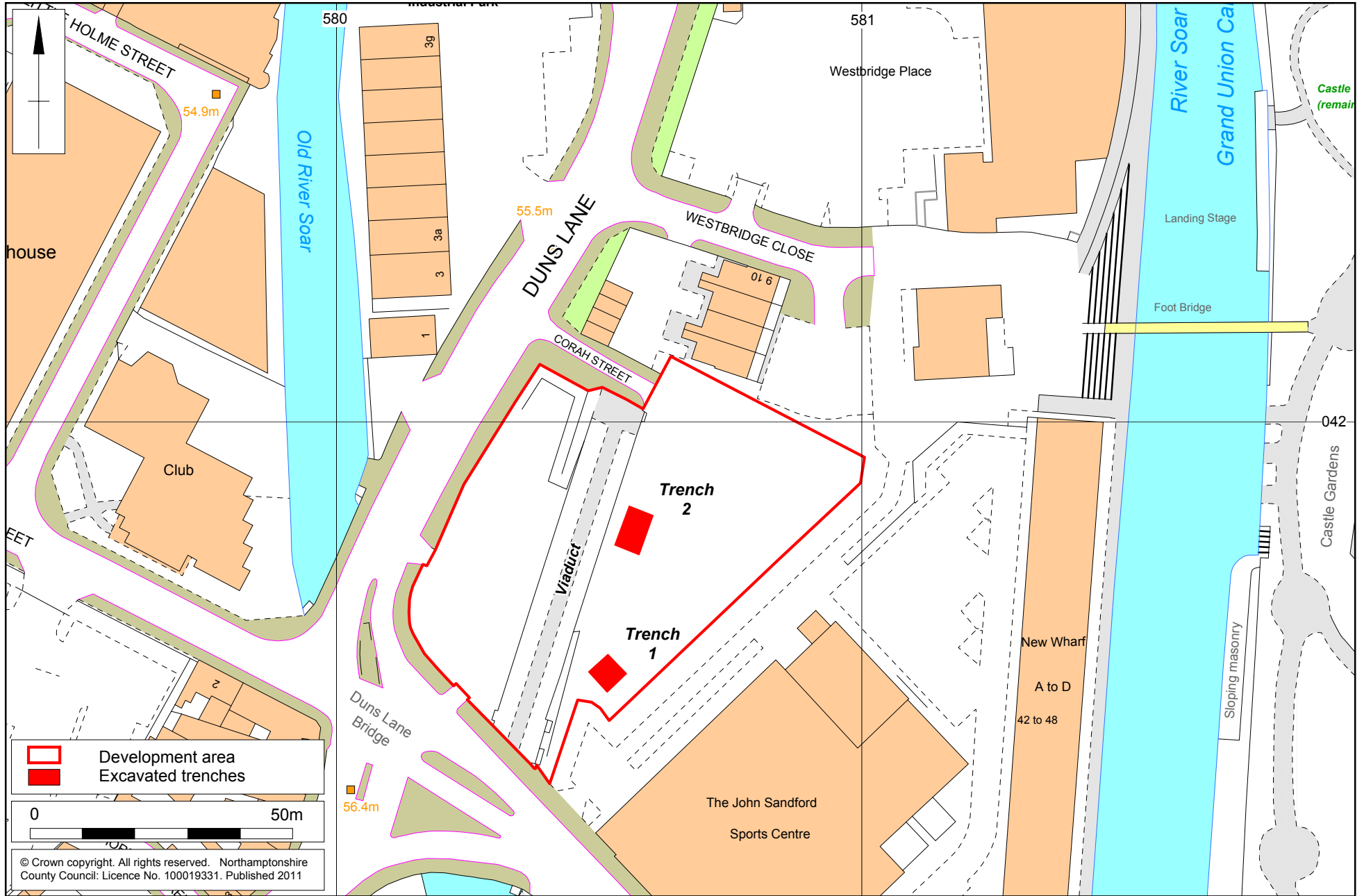
3 BACKGROUND

3.1 Topography and geology

The proposed development area is located between Duns Lane and Western Boulevard in the Westcotes area of central Leicester. It lies close to the western bank of the Old River Soar which once occupied the site and is likely to have been canalised or diverted prior to the initial development of the area.

The site lies at around 55m above Ordnance Datum and the underlying geology comprises alluvium or river gravels (BGS 2007).

Scale 1:1000 (A4)



Trench locations Fig 2

3.2 Historical and archaeological background

A full consideration of the site's historical background and archaeological potential with full Historic Environment Record listings is presented in a Desk-Based Assessment (DBA) which was carried out by University of Leicester Archaeological Services (Hunt 2010).

The site has the potential to contain paleochannels relating to the former course of the River Soar and, as it lies within the area of the extra-mural suburbs of Roman and medieval Leicester, archaeological remains from these periods may survive.

The entire site has been previously developed. Map regression presented in the DBA shows considerable development on the site since the late 19th century. This has included the housing along Corah Street, the *Providence Foundry* and public houses. The viaduct and sidings of the former Great Central Railway crossed the site from south to north.

This development is likely to have impacted greatly on the archaeological potential of the study area. Some of the buildings are likely to have had cellars and the foundations of the viaduct were removed to a depth of 5m. A watching brief carried out in 2005 during the excavation of test pits in the western part of the site recovered Roman pottery (Stone 2005).

At the time of excavation the site had been cleared and levelled. The crushed rubble from the recent demolition of the viaduct and the *Pump and Tap* public house was stock piled on the site.

4 EXCAVATION RESULTS

4.1 Methodology

The trenches were positioned using a Leica System 1200 GPS and related to the Ordnance Survey National Grid. They were excavated, under continuous archaeological supervision, using a 360° tracked mechanical excavator fitted with a flat toothless bucket. The upcast was stacked adjacent to the trenches.

Archaeological excavation and recording followed the guidelines outlined in NA's *Archaeological Fieldwork Manual* (2006). Trenches containing archaeological remains were cleaned by hand, sufficient to define the features. Each feature or deposit was given a unique number consisting of the trench number and an individual context number (eg 102, Trench 1, context 2). The details of each context were recorded on

pro-forma sheets. The trenches were planned (scale 1:50) and section drawings were made at an appropriate scale (1:10 or 1:20). Levels were taken on the trenches at appropriate points, on section datum and on all major features and related to Ordnance Datum. A photographic record was made of the excavation, using 35mm black and white negative and colour slide film, supplemented by digital images.

Artefacts were collected by hand and retained, receiving appropriate care prior to removal from site (Walker 1990). The archive will be prepared in accordance with the requirements of the Museums and Galleries Commission (MGC 1992).

All works were carried out accordance with the specification prepared by RPS (Slatcher 2011), and the Institute for Archaeologists' *Code of Conduct* (1985, revised 2010) and *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Field Evaluation* (1994, revised 2008). All procedures complied with Northamptonshire County Council Health and Safety provisions and Northamptonshire Archaeology's Health and Safety at Work Guidelines.

4.2 Trench 1

Trench 1 was located near to the southern corner of the proposed development area and measured 6.20m by 5.50m (Figs 3 and 4). The trench was excavated to a depth of 2.80m below the present ground surface. At this depth, the natural substrate had not been encountered so, given the absence of archaeological remains and following consultation with the City Archaeologist, excavation ceased. In the interests of health and safety the trench was benched between 1.20m and 1.50m below the present ground surface.

The lower half of the trench revealed layers of grey-brown to pinkish-orange sandy or silty clay, (106) to (112) between 0.10m and 0.40m thick (Fig 4, section 1 and 2). These generally contained occasional red brick fragments, roof slate, coal and charcoal flecks. A single sherd of 19th-century blue transfer-printed pottery was recovered from layer (109).

Overlying layer (106) there was a possible former topsoil, (105) which was up to 0.35m thick and comprised a dark grey clay loam with abundant coal and charcoal inclusions which produced white slipped earthenware and mochaware dating to the 19th century (Fig 5, section 2).

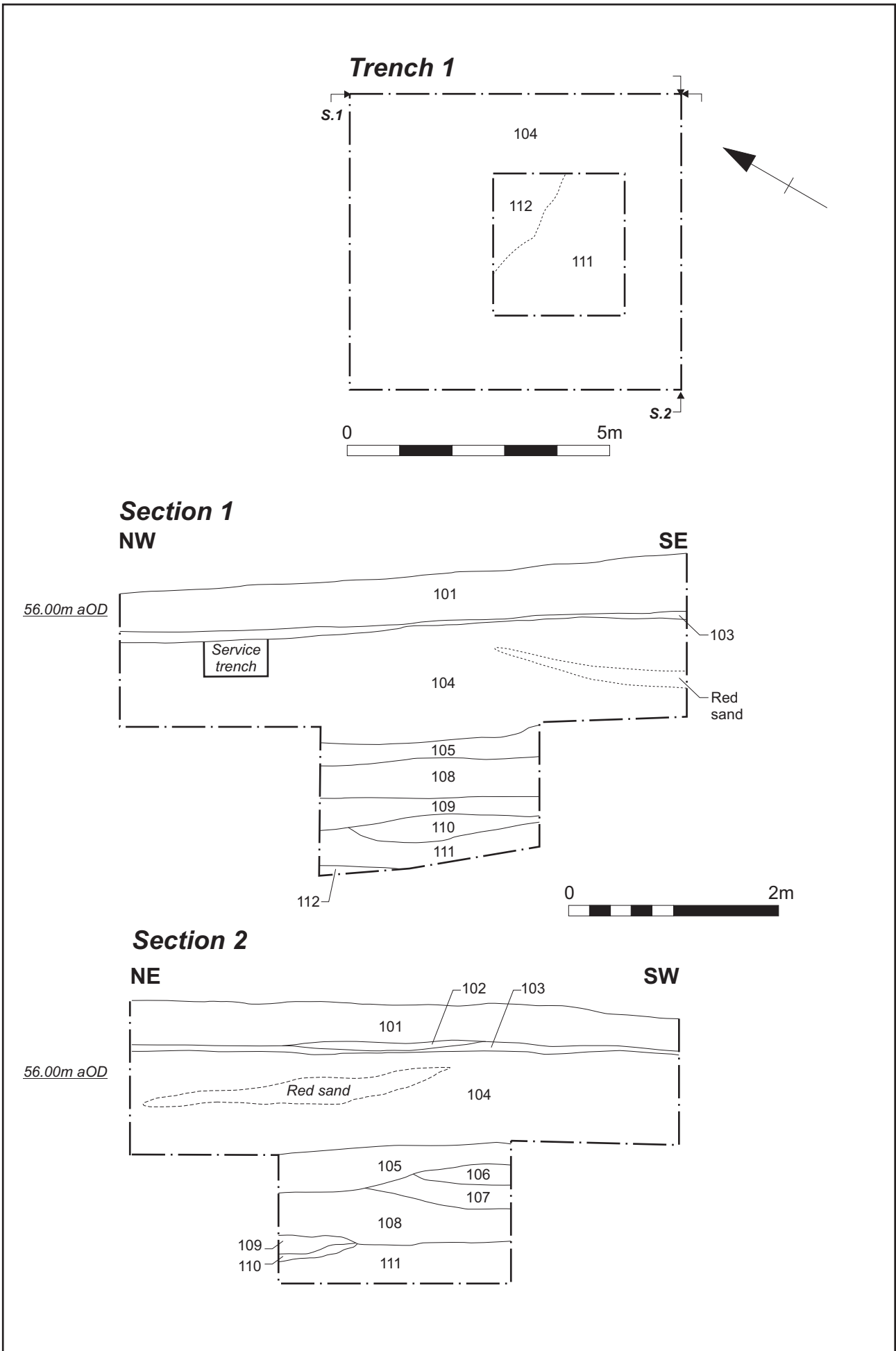


Trench 1, looking north-east Fig 3

This was overlain by a layer of clean, light bluish-grey stone aggregate (104), 1m thick, which had occasional lenses of red sandy clay. Overlying this was a thin layer of crushed mortar and coal dust, (103), 0.10m thick which in places was very compact, (102). This was overlain by demolition rubble, (101), 0.45m thick which was associated with the recent site clearance and made up the present ground surface.

4.3 Trench 2

Trench 2 was located approximately 20m to the north of Trench 1 and measured 8m by 5m (Fig 5). The depth of the trench was determined by the pile cap design of the proposed developed and excavation ceased at 1.60m below the present ground surface. Accordingly, in the interests of health and safety, the trench edges were benched at 1.20m. The natural substrate was not exposed by the trench.



Scales 1:100 & 1:50(A4)

Trench 1, plan and sections Fig 4

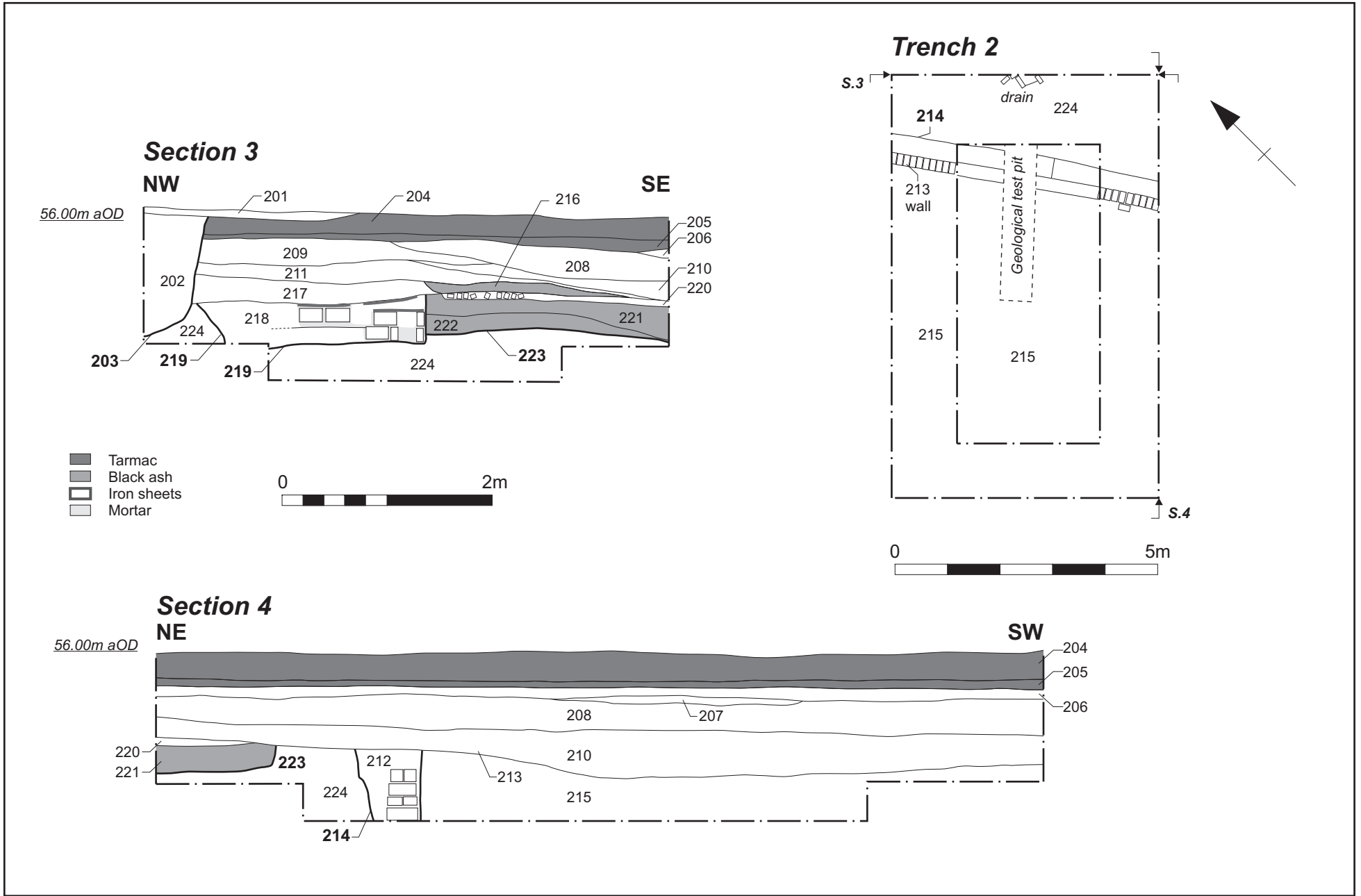
The earliest deposits encountered were layers (215) and (224) which were divided by a wall foundation trench [214] which crossed the trench from north-west to south-east (Figs 3, 6 and 7).

To the north of the wall, deposit (224) comprised a layer of dark grey crushed mortar and mortar fragments with frequent inclusions of brick fragments, roof slate, charcoal and 19th-century pottery. The wall foundation trench, aligned north-west to south-east, was 0.60m wide and at least 0.70m deep, its full depth extended below the confines of the trial trench.



Trench 2, looking north-east Fig 5

The wall itself survived to at least four courses in height (0.50m) and comprised a single width of alternating courses of headers and stretchers laid against the southern side of the foundation trench. The unfrosted red bricks (213) were mortar bonded, 240mm long, 120mm wide and 80 mm deep. A single brick pier, one brick deep, on the southern side suggests it may have been a boundary wall rather than part of a structure. The surrounding fill (212), within the foundation trench, comprised a dark brown clay silt with frequent ash, mortar and brick fragment inclusions.



To the south of the wall, layer (215) was at least 0.60m deep and comprised a dark brown-black layer of ash with brick and mortar fragments. It contained pottery dating to the 19th-century.

The different materials on either side, (224) and (215) would suggest that either one of them or both were deposited after the wall's construction, despite the foundation trench appearing to cut both. The dark ashy material on the southern, or outside of the wall, (215) may have been dumped up against the wall after its construction, whilst the more rubble-like deposit, (224), may have been present before its construction.

To the north of the wall and 1m away there was a shallow sub oval pit, [223] which was at least 3.50m in diameter, 0.40m deep with a broad flat base and near vertical, straight sides (Fig 6, sections 3 and 4). The lower fill, (222) was 0.20m deep and comprised a probable demolition material of grey-brown clay with abundant brick fragments and mortar. Overlying this was a dump of black ash and mortar fragments (221) which was up to 0.31m deep. The upper fill, (220) comprised brick fragments and sooty material, 0.10m deep.

Cutting pit [223] was a linear brick-lined drain, [219], which was aligned north-south and did not appear to extend past the line of wall [214] (Fig 7, section 3). It was 2.50m wide with steep sloping sides, a broad flat base and was filled with a brick rubble, mortar pieces, slag and charcoal. Where the brick lining survived along the eastern edge, it had been capped with iron plates, 0.05m thick.

Overlying the drain, the pit and the wall were a series of deposits representing episodes of likely demolition and levelling (217), (216), (211), (210), (209), (208), (207) and (206). These were 0.10m-0.45m thick and invariably comprised crushed mortar, brick fragments, ash, slag, roof slate and tile. Of note was layer (217) which consisted entirely of slag and was probably a dump of industrial waste. Overlying these levelling layers were two layers of tarmac, the latest of which made up the present ground surface, and a thin layer of demolition rubble relating to the recent clearance of the site. Cutting the tarmac but overlain by the recent demolition rubble there was a disused service trench, [203], which was partially exposed running parallel to the western edge of the trench. It was at least 0.60m wide, 1.20m deep and filled with modern demolition material.

A geotechnical test pit had previously been excavated within the confines of the trench.

5 FINDS

5.1 The pottery by Iain Soden

A total of 37 sherds, weighing 904g, were recovered in seven types from four contexts. They all date from the 19th-century. They have been related to the published Leicester type-series where possible (Davies and Sawday 1999).

Table 1: Pottery by Type and context

Type/Context	Type series	105	109	215	224	Total
Underglaze blue transfer-printed earthenware	EA		1/4g	22/419g		23/423g
Nottingham /Derby Stoneware	SW5			2/25g		2/25g
Pancheon	EA6			1/26g	1/23g	2/49g
English stoneware	SW			1/40g		1/40g
White-glazed earthenware	EA	1/3g		2/25g	1/132g	4/160g
Sprigged bone china	-			1/20g		1/20g
Mocha-type(?Swadlincote/Church Gresley)	-	1/108g		2/41g	1/38g	4/187g
Total		2/111g	1/4g	31/596g	3/193g	37/904

Most of these types would pass without comment in late post-medieval/modern industrially-made wares, but for some closer dating which is possible for some of the above.

Sprigging, the practice of applying cut-outs of finely moulded clay motifs onto tablewares, particularly bone china, was popular from the 1740s and was a product of the introduction of finely-carved Plaster-of-Paris moulds. The example here is a 19th-century tea-cup form, with a very simple floral sprig, not particularly well-executed.

The distinctive Mocha ware was popular for only a relatively short period, c1830-50. The forms here include what can only be described as a 'flower pot' without a drain-hole. The author has seen this form only once elsewhere, among Mocha kiln-debris during excavations at the Sharpe's Pottery kilns in Swadlincote, Derbyshire, which made Mocha and Lustreware during that short period and produced in common with its neighbour Church Gresley. The single example from this site is in every way identical to those from Sharpe's Pottery, Swadlincote, to which there is a straightforward road-link from Leicester.

It is likely that deposit (215) was laid down sometime soon after 1830/50, while the remainder can only be broadly described as originating in the 19th century. None is of intrinsic interest.

5.2 The clay pipe and glass by Tim Upson-Smith

The clay tobacco pipe

Recovered during the excavation were seven stem fragments, one bowl fragment and one complete bowl. One stem fragment was from context (206), the remaining pieces were recovered from context (215).

The stem fragments measured between 21mm to 62mm in length with a bore diameter of 4/64 of an inch, suggesting a late 19th- century date. One fragment from (215) had a bore diameter 6/64 of an inch suggesting an 18th-century date, although this piece was quite abraded and clearly residual.

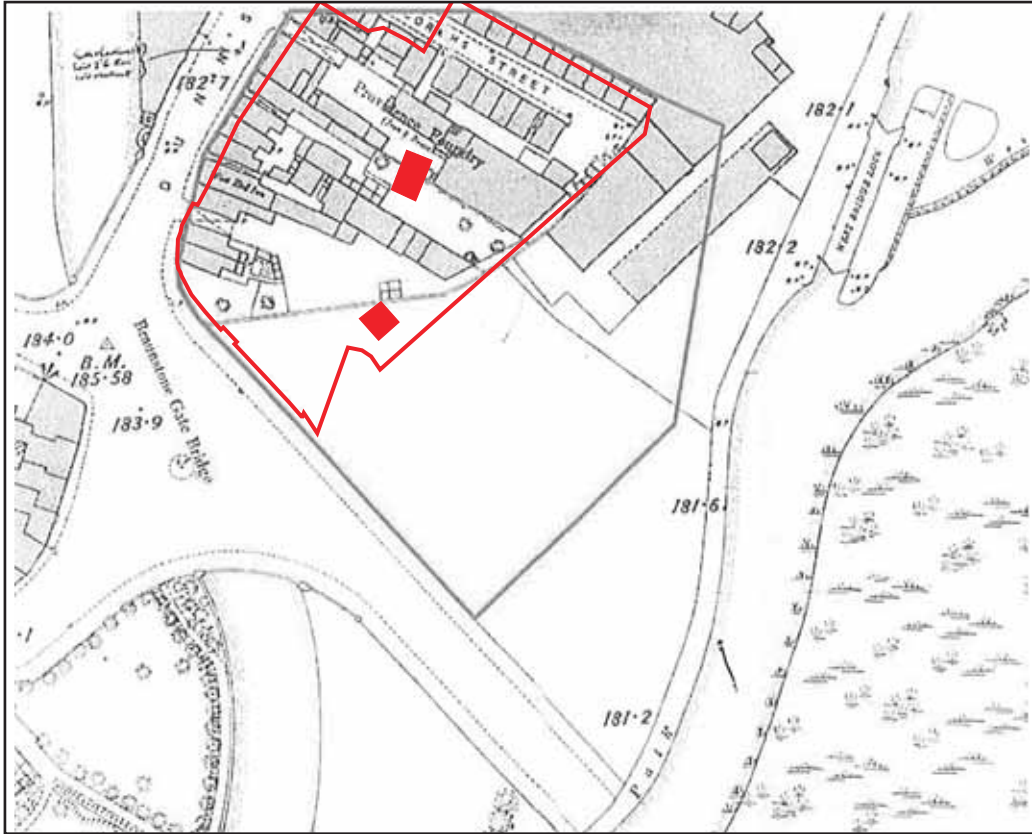
The bowl fragment had an oak leaf design on the front of the bowl (the only surviving portion of the bowl), which was quite a common motif in the late nineteenth century. The design was not very clear on the pipe suggesting that the mould was worn.

The complete bowl has a plain moulded ridge on the front and back of the bowl, and is also late 19th-century in date.

The glass

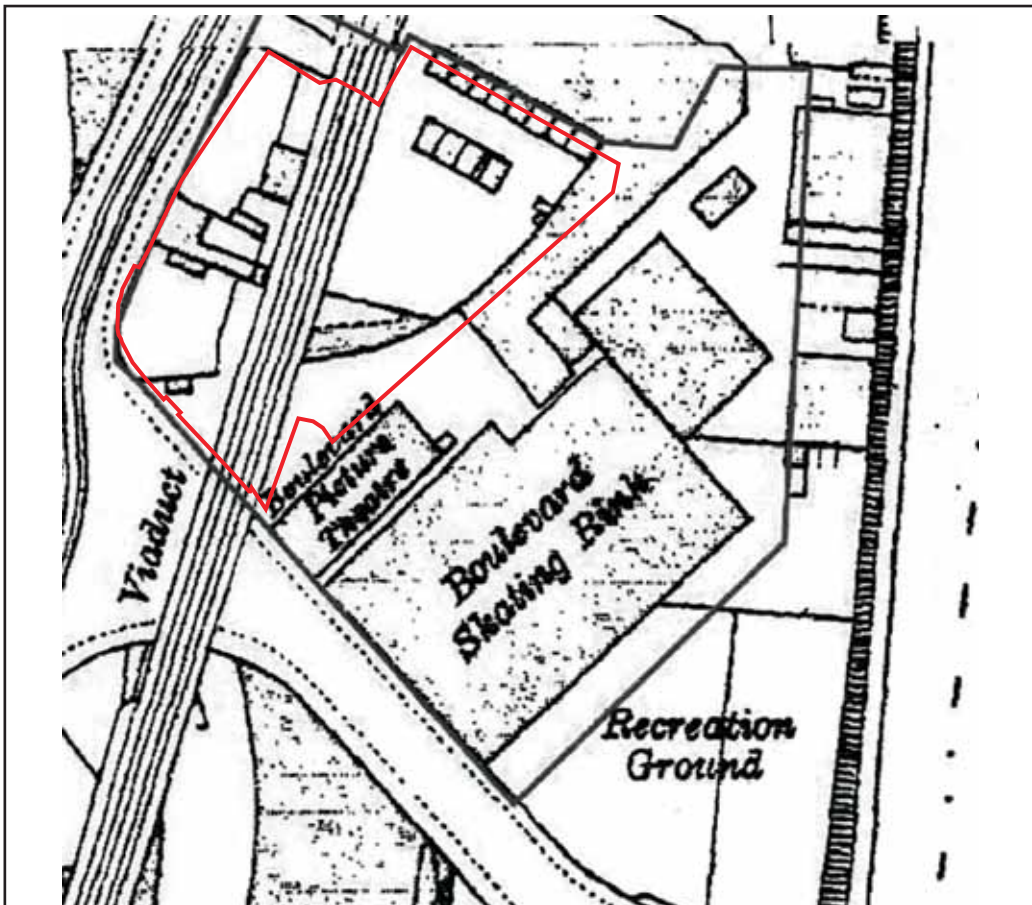
The base of a wine glass in clear glass was also recovered from context (215). The glass had been blown and retained on its base the rough finished pontil mark where the pontil rod had been removed once the glass had been finished.

The pontil rod was a rod usually of glass which was placed onto the base of the object being blown so that the blown end could be cracked off and finished. This form of manufacture was common from the earliest period of glass manufacture through until the late 19th-century and is still used for artisan produced pieces. For mass produced wares it is more common that these will be moulded.



1886 1st edition Ordnance Survey map showing the site outline and excavated trenches

Fig 7



1915 Ordnance Survey map showing site outline Fig 8

6 DISCUSSION

The trial trench evaluation has shown that the any potential archaeological remains present within the application area are likely to have been significantly impacted upon by previous development, clearance and levelling episodes (Figs 7 and 8).

Cartographic evidence presented in the desk based assessment (Hunt 2010) shows channels of the River Soar crossing the site prior to its diversion or canalisation towards the end of the 19th century. Significant amounts of material must have been brought to the site to consolidate and level the ground once occupied by these channels to allow for the construction of the *Providence Foundry*, the *West End Inn* public house and associated buildings shown on the 1886 1st edition Ordnance Survey map (Fig 7). It is probable that it is this material that was encountered in Trench 1.

Trench 2 was in a part of the application area which had been occupied by a number of structures since the initial development of the site in the 19th-century, which would account for the slightly more complex stratigraphic sequence when compared to Trench 1. The line of the wall matches exactly that of a boundary wall associated with the foundry shown on the 1st edition Ordnance Survey map (Fig 7) and the drain is likely to be of this same development.

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APPENDIX: SUMMARY OF CONTEXTS AND FEATURES

Trench No	Length, width & alignment	NGR (centre)	Surface height	Depth & height of natural
1	6.20m x 5.50m NW-SE	458051 304152	56m aOD	Not encountered
Context	Context type Feature & type	Description	Dimensions	Artefacts/ Samples
101	Layer	Dark brown-grey clay loam. Brick frags and mortar	0.40m-0.55m thick	-
102	Layer	Compact crushed mortar	0.06-0.10m thick	-
103	Layer	Crushed mortar, charcoal and coal dust	0.05-0.10m thick	-
104	Layer	Modern stone aggregate with sand lenses	0.90m-1m thick	-
105	Layer	Dark grey-brown clay loam	0.15m-0.20m thick	Pottery
106	Layer	Grey-green silty clay, charcoal and mortar flecks	0.19m thick	
107	Layer	Pinkish-red clay	0.22m thick	
108	Layer	Orange-brown sandy clay, pebbles and charcoal flecks	0.20m-0.40m thick	
109	Layer	Dark grey-brown sandy clay, coal frags, brick, slate	0.20m-0.30m thick	Pottery
110	Layer	Pink-grey sandy clay	0.25m thick	
111	Layer	Pinkish-red clay	0.38m thick	
112	Layer	Dark brown silty clay	>0.10m thick	

Trench No	Length, width & alignment	NGR (centre)	Surface height	Depth & height of natural
2	8m x 5m NE-SW	458056 304178	56m aOD	Not encountered
Context	Context type Feature & type	Description	Dimensions	Artefacts/ Samples
201	Layer	Modern demolition	0.20m	-
202	Fill of [203]	Demolition rubble,	1.20m thick	-
203	Cut of service trench	Steep-sided, concave base	1.20m deep, >0.70m wide	-
204	Layer	Tarmac	0.25m thick	
205	layer	Tarmac	0.10m thick	
206	Layer	Grey silty clay, ash	0.10m thick	Clay pipe
207	Layer	Brown-red silty clay	0.05m thick	
208	Layer	Mortar, brick and tile	0.30m thick	
209	Layer	Brown clay, brick and tile	0.25m thick	
210	Layer	Dark brown-grey clay, ash brick, mortar and tile	0.10m-0.45m thick	
211	Layer	Dark yellow-brown crushed mortar	0.22m thick	
212	Fill of 214	Dark brown-black silty clay, ash, mortar, brick	0.70m thick	
213	Brick	Mortar bonded red brick wall	0.25m wide, 0.50m high	
214	Cut	Foundation trench of wall (213)	0.70m wide, 0.70m deep	
215	Layer	Black ash, charcoal, brick, tile and mortar	0.40m-0.60m thick	Pottery, clay pipe, glass
216	Layer	Dark brown-black clay and ash	0.10m thick	
217	Layer	Slag	0.10m-0.20m thick	
218	Fill of [219]	Dark grey clay, mortar, charcoal, slag	0.35m-0.40m thick	
219	Cut	Brick-lined drain, metal capping. Steep straight sides, broad flat base	2.20m wide, 0.35m deep.	
220	Layer	Dark grey silty clay with sooty material and brick fragments	0.10m thick	
221	Layer	Black ash and mortar fragments	0.26m-0.31m thick	

222	Layer	Grey-brown clay with brick fragments and mortar	0.25m thick	
223	Cut	Pit, oval, steep profile	>3.50m long 0.40m deep	
224	Layer	Crushed mortar and brick	>0.70m thick	Pottery
225	Drain	Same as [219]		
226	Cut of service trench	Same as [203]		



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