

Archaeological Services & Consultancy Ltd

STRIP AND RECORD EXCAVATION: 21 ST JAMES'S ROAD, NORTHAMPTON

on behalf of Westleigh Developments



**By
David Fell BA MA MIFA**

June 2004

ASC: /583NJR/3

Letchworth House
Chesney Wold, Bleak Hall,
Milton Keynes MK6 1NE
Tel: 01908 608989 Fax: 01908 605700
Email: office@archaeological-services.co.uk
Website: www.archaeological-services.co.uk



Site Data

<i>ASC site code:</i>	NJR	<i>Project no:</i>	582
<i>County:</i>	Northamptonshire		
<i>District:</i>	Northampton		
<i>Parish:</i>	St James		
<i>NGR:</i>	SP 745 604		
<i>Extent of site:</i>	c.0.46 ha		
<i>Present land use:</i>	Site of former factory		
<i>Planning proposal:</i>	Housing development		
<i>Planning application ref/date:</i>	N/2000/497		
<i>Client:</i>	Westleigh Developments Tudorgate Grange Business Park Enderby Road Whetstone Leicester LE8 6EP		
<i>Contact name:</i>	Matthew Moore		
<i>Telephone</i>		<i>Fax:</i>	

Internal Quality Check

<i>Primary Author:</i>	David Fell	<i>Date:</i>	30 th June 2004
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Figure 1: General location (scale 1:25,000)

Summary

In May 2004 a 'strip and record excavation' was undertaken at 21 St James Road, Northampton. An evaluation showed that remains of a row of terraced houses were on the site and the excavation was required in order to take environmental samples from any 19th century features associated with the houses which may be present. A variety of archaeological remains dating to the late 19th and early 20th centuries were found on the site. Two brick walls, interpreted as the east and north walls of the terraced block were revealed. A number of external features, including a well, privy/cess pit and coal cellar were also recorded. Deposits offering environmental potential were not present on the site.

1 Introduction

1.1 Planning Background

- 1.1.1 *Westleigh Developments* intend undertaking development at 21 St James Road, Northampton. The developer applied to *Northampton Borough Council* for planning permission in support of the development (Planning application number N/2000/497). In line with the guidance contained in the document PPG16 *Archaeology and Planning the Planning Assistant (Archaeology)* of *Northamptonshire County Council* advised that the site may be archaeologically sensitive and required the developer to commission an archaeological evaluation. An archaeological desk-based assessment had been prepared for the site by a previous developer (NA 2000).
- 1.1.2 The evaluation revealed that the development had the potential to damage or destroy paleoenvironmental deposits and remains of 19th century date (Fell & Hunn 2004). Accordingly the *Historic Environment Team Leader* of *Northamptonshire County Council* required the developer to commission a further stage of works, comprising a pre-emptive 'strip and sample excavation' and palaeo-environmental sampling during the excavation of any deep trenches. A *brief* was issued for the project (Flitcroft 2004).
- 1.1.3 The developer commissioned *Archaeological Services and Consultancy Ltd* (ASC) to undertake the work. This document presents the results of the pre-emptive 'strip and sample excavation'. A separate report will be issued detailing the results of the palaeo-environmental sampling.

1.2 Reason for Work

The work was necessary because the development, which comprises the construction of a new housing development (Fig. 3) has the potential to damage or destroy deposits on the site.

1.3 **Setting**

1.3.1 *Location and extent*

The site is in Northampton and is centred on Ordnance Survey grid reference SP 745 604 (Fig. 1). It is situated on the east side of the town centre, close to the river Nene and the railway station (Fig. 2) and comprises an irregular shaped plot of c.0.46ha.

1.3.2 *Geology and topography*

The site is in an urban area and the natural soils have not been mapped. A factory formerly occupied the site which may have disturbed the natural soil profile, but if the soils survive they are likely to comprise the *Banbury Association*: namely well drained loamy soils over Jurassic and Cretaceous ironstone (Soil Survey 1983, 544). The natural drainage of the area is dominated by the river Nene, which follows a modified course to the east of the site. A minor tributary of the river Nene flows close to the east side of the site. The area is essentially flat and lies at an elevation of c.60m OD.

1.3.3 *Buildings, access and services*

The site had been cleared prior to the commencement of the work. It comprised an open area, but a substantial spoil heap partially occupied the west side of the site. Access was from the north, via Byfield Road (Fig. 2).

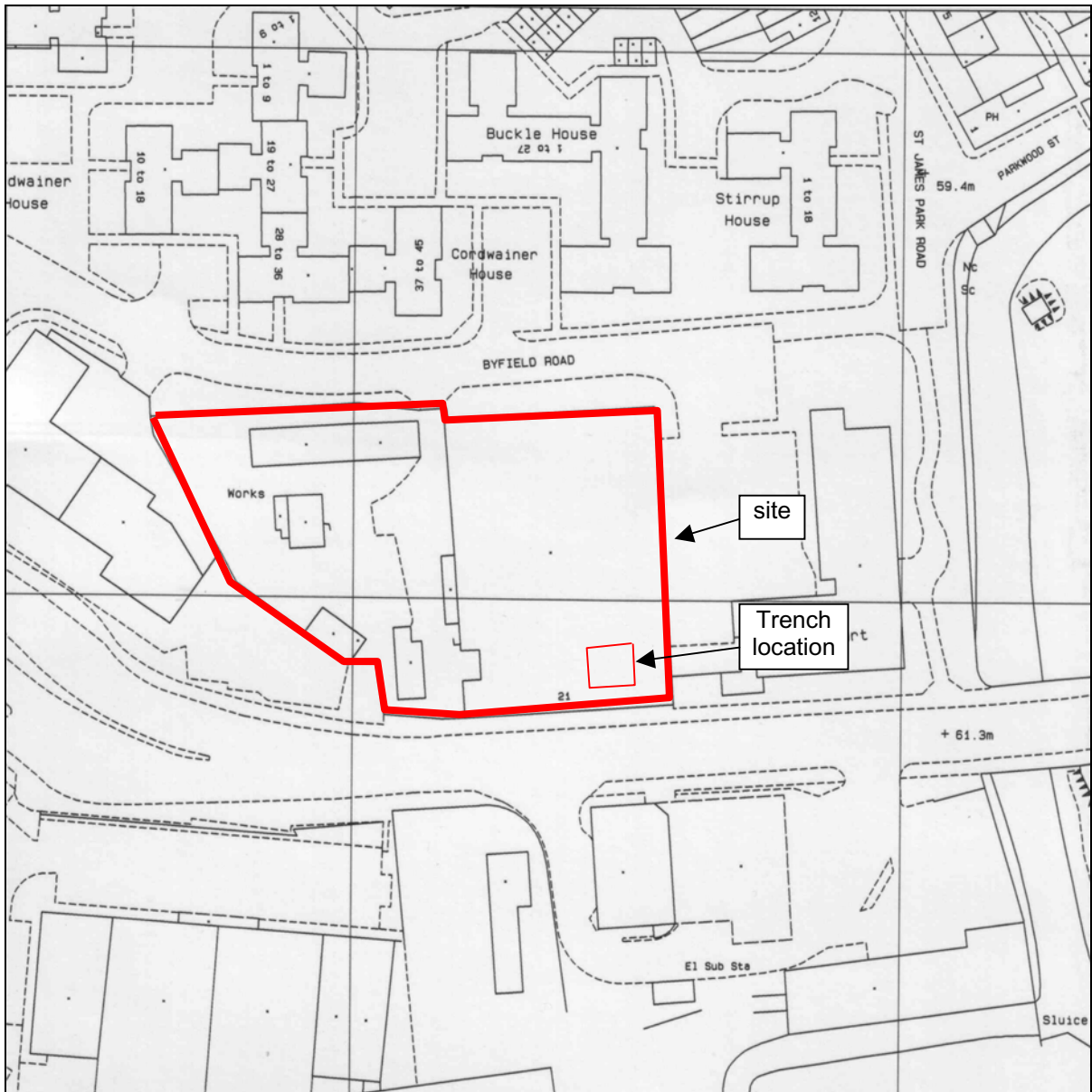


Figure 2: Site plan and trench location (scale 1:1250)

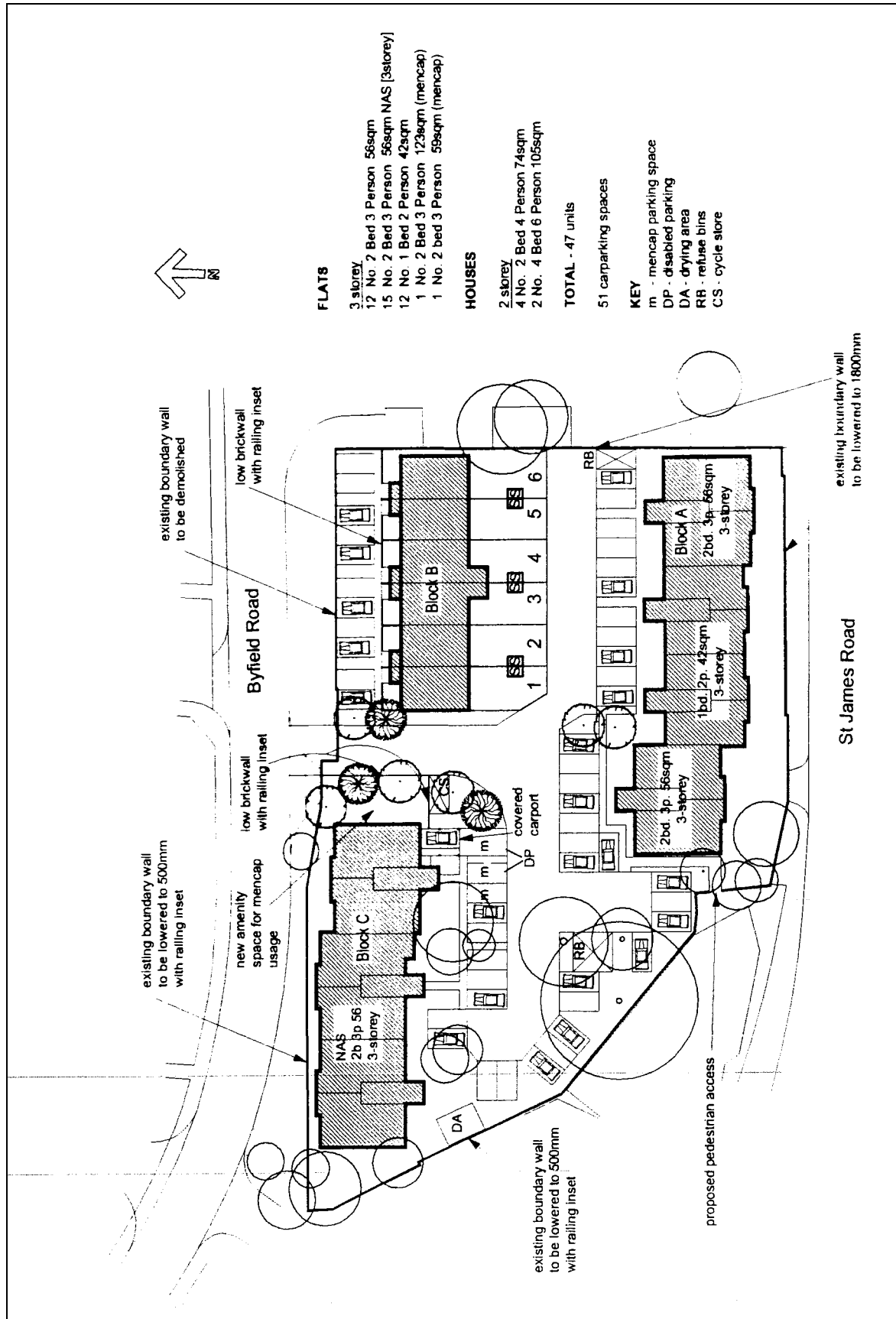


Figure 3: Plan of the proposed development (*not to scale*)

2 Aims and Methods

2.1 Aims

As described in the *brief* (Section 2), the aim of the strip and sample excavation was to identify, recover and analyse evidence for activities within and associated with the terrace of late 19th-early 20th century buildings on the St James Street frontage.

2.2 Methods

The work was carried out according to the *brief* (Section 3.3), which required a pre-emptive 'strip and sample' excavation. The area comprised two of the 19th century terraced houses and their rear yards. Following discussion with the *Historic Environment Team Leader* it was agreed that it would comprise an area of c. 10m sq close to the southeast corner of the site.

2.3 Standards

The work conforms to the project design, to the relevant sections of the Institute of Archaeologists' *Code of Conduct* (IFA 2000) and *Standard & Guidance Notes* (IFA 2001), the draft *East Midlands Archaeological Research Framework, Policy and Guidance for Archaeological Fieldwork Projects in Northamptonshire*, and to the relevant sections of ASC's own *Operations Manual*.

3 Archaeological and Historical Background

- 3.1 Northampton is an area of considerable archaeological and historical interest (RCHM 1985). Available archaeological and historical sources suggested that site offered the potential to reveal evidence from a variety of periods, of which the focus of interest was considered to be the prehistoric, medieval and post-medieval periods.
- 3.2 The site is situated close to the river Nene. The Nene valley was an area of considerable importance during the prehistoric periods and remains of this period have been found in the Northampton area.
- 3.3 Northampton probably originated during the Saxon period when a settlement developed on the east side of the river Nene. A complex of timber buildings and remains of a possible Saxon minster church have been found at St Peter's Church to the east of the site (RCHM 1985, 42).
- 3.4 The town is included in the Domesday survey (1086), where it is referred to as *Northantone* (Morris 1979). A castle was constructed on the west side of the town, close to the river and Northampton developed rapidly during the medieval period, eventually becoming the third largest town in England.
- 3.5 The site is situated away from the main area of medieval settlement, on the west side of the river Nene, close to the west bridge. Evidence for occupation from the 13th century has been recorded in the St James' area, where there is evidence for tanning, smithing and other light industrial processes.
- 3.6 The present St James Road may have been in existence since the medieval period and was an important route leading to the midlands. Stone footings dating from the 13th century, perhaps from buildings fronting onto St James Road have been recorded at the former Travis Perkins site (NCC 1996) and there was potential for similar structures on the present site.
- 3.7 The north part of the site probably comprised open ground during the later and post-medieval periods. Speed's map of Northampton (1610) shows a building and water channel in an area close to, or within the site. The desk-based assessment interpreted the evidence from the Speed map to suggest that the building was situated in the south-east corner of the site and that the channel followed a north to south alignment across the centre of the site (NA 2000, fig. 5). A feature, interpreted as part of the channel, was found on the Travis Perkins site (NA 1996, 8).
- 3.8 The development of this part of the St James' Street frontage probably commenced during the late 17th or 18th centuries. A map of the parish of Duston, published in 1722 shows a building to the east of the site, while a building of similar size and shape is shown to the east of this building on an early 19th century map of the area. It unclear whether these are one and the same building.
- 3.9 A row of terraced houses was constructed along the street frontage, probably during the second half of the 19th century, but at that time the remainder of the site comprised open ground. The layout of the buildings is shown on the 1885 Ordnance Survey 1:500 scale map (Fig. 4). They comprised terraced houses, fronting onto St James

Street with an open area to the rear, enclosed by a boundary wall and parts of the footings were identified during the evaluation (Fell and Hunn 2004, section 4.6.5). The three houses at the east end of the row shared a single rear yard. Two square structures (labelled A & B on Fig. 4) are shown abutting the west and north walls of the yard respectively and were probably privies or other outbuildings.

- 3.10 The St James' area developed considerably during the later 19th century and the 1885 map illustrates the extent of the urban expansion that had taken place by the middle decades of the century. With the exception of the street frontage the site remained open ground and was part of a more extensive enclave of open land on the west side of the river Nene. Development encroached into the open area during the later decades of the 19th century and when the area to the north of the site was developed as a large cycle works (Fig. 5).
- 3.11 The terraced houses survived into the 1920s and are shown on the 1926 Ordnance Survey map (Fig. 6). The layout of the rear yards had been simplified by the removal of the dividing walls and the outbuildings are not shown. If the outbuildings shown on the previous maps were privies, the houses may have been provided with internal toilets by this time.
- 3.12 The area was developed for commercial purposes during the early 20th century. The cycle factory was expanded and a complex of smaller buildings constructed to the west. A picture theatre and hall were built beyond the east boundary of the site while a large north to south aligned structure occupied the central part of the site.
- 3.13 The terraced houses were probably demolished *c.*1928, when a factory was constructed on the site. The 1938 Ordnance Survey map (Fig. 7) shows the new layout of the area. The factory, which produced 'lasts' for the manufacturing of shoes occupied the east side of the site, including the area of the former terraced houses. The west part of the site was largely open ground, with the exception of an east to west aligned linear building towards the north side of the site and separate subrectangular building to the south.
- 3.14 The Ordnance Survey map was revised in the 1970s (Fig. 8). An air raid shelter constructed in the south part of the site *c.*1939, but the area had altered little since the 1930s. The factory was demolished in *c.*2003 and the site is in the process of redevelopment.

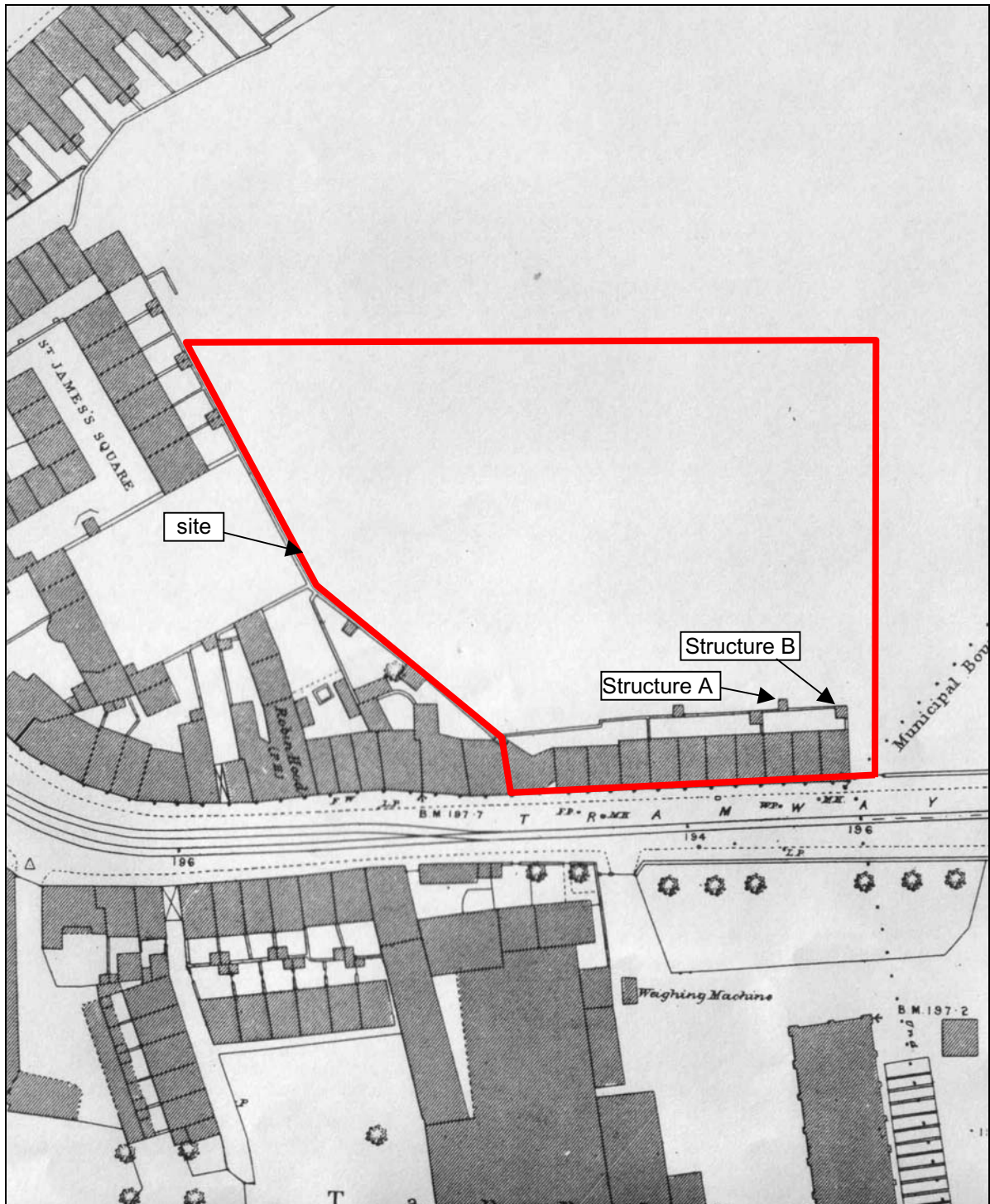


Figure 4: Extract from the Ordnance Survey 1:500 scale map (1885)

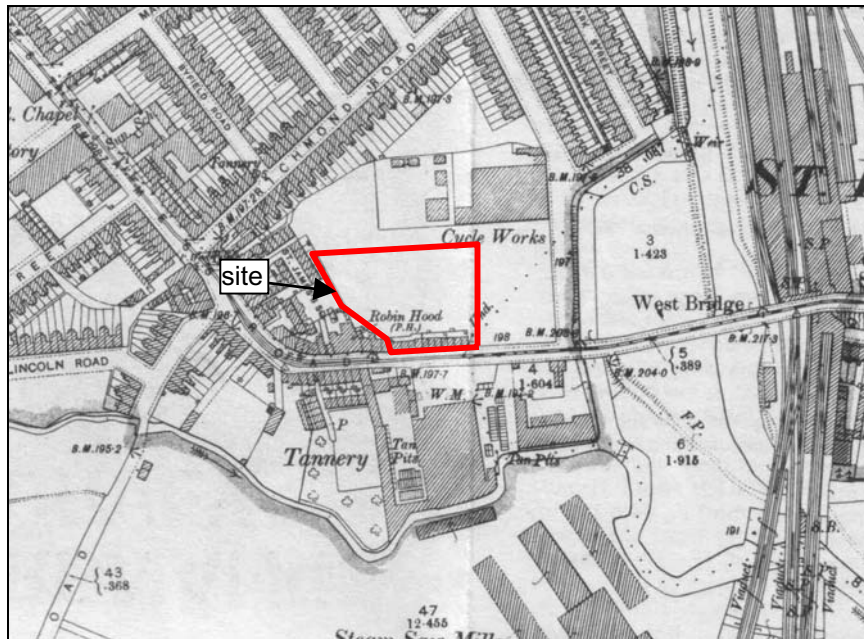


Figure 5: Extract from the Ordnance Survey 1:2500 scale map (1901)

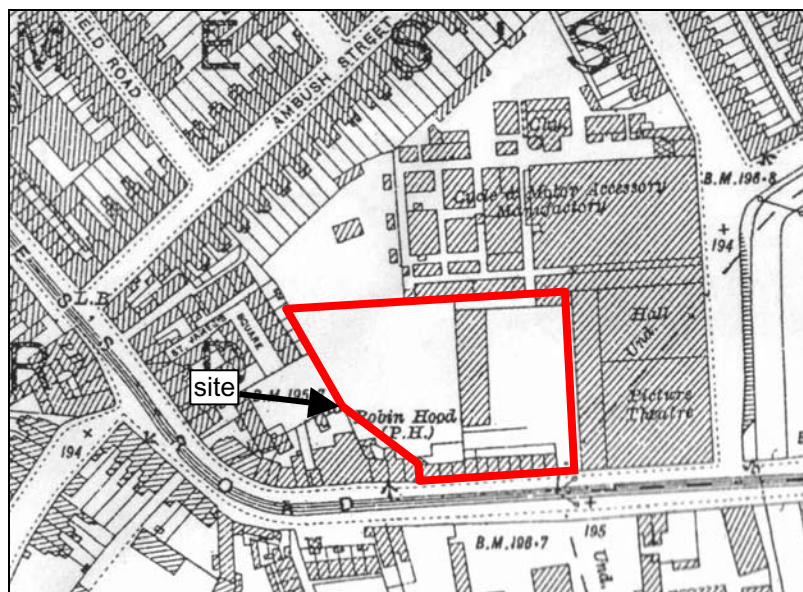


Figure 6: Extract from the Ordnance Survey 1:2500 scale map (1925)

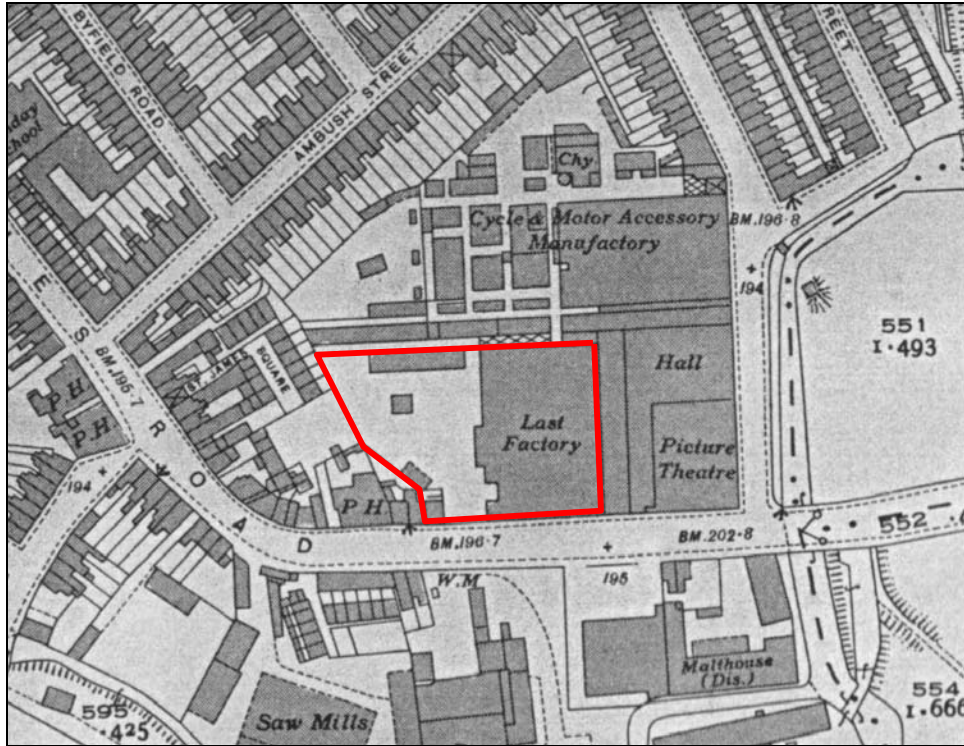


Figure 7: Extract from the Ordnance Survey 1:2500 scale map (1938)

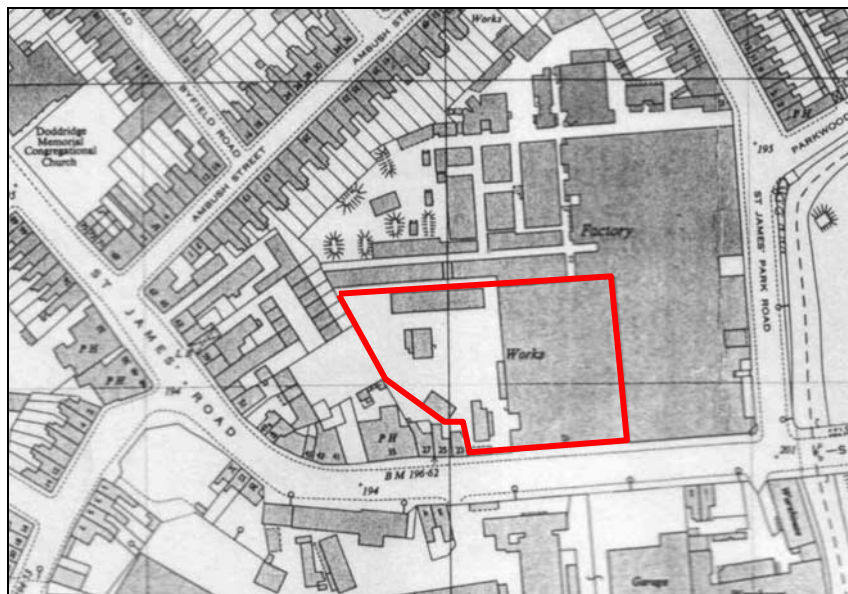


Figure 8: Extract from the Ordnance Survey 1:2500 scale map (c.1970)

4 Results

4.1 The following paragraphs provide a summary of the results of the strip and record excavation. A full description of all contexts is provided in Appendix 1.

4.2 A single trench was excavated in the southeast corner of the site (Fig. 2). It was located in order to investigate the footprint and rear yards of two of the 19th century terraced houses identified on the 19th century Ordnance Survey maps and also during the evaluation. It measured c.11m x 13m and was c.1.6m deep.

4.3 *The results*

4.3.1 *Phase 1: Alluvium*

The natural strata of the area comprises alluvial clay. This was observed across the trench at a depth of c.1.5-1.6m. This was examined during the evaluation and will be the subject of a separate phase of monitoring during the excavation of any deep sections.

4.3.2 *Phase 2: 19th century features*

The 19th Century Terraced Houses and associated features

A row of terraced houses was constructed along the St James Street frontage during the mid 19th century (section 3.9). Archaeological evidence for the houses was revealed during the evaluation (Fell and Hunn 2004, section 4.6.5). The present strip and record excavation targeted two of these houses in order to obtain environmental evidence from associated cut features.

Five walls, interpreted as part of three of the cottages were revealed during the evaluation (*ibid*, fig. 9). One of these (Wall 4) was identified again during the excavation.

During the excavation Wall 4 was traced to its full extent, on the east side of the excavation area (Plates 1 and 2). It was 7m long and intersected with an east to west aligned wall which extended for a distance of c.10.5m, and continued beyond the west side of trench. A cess-pit/privy (501) and a coal cellar (505) which were contemporary with the walls were recorded.

Cess-pit/privy (501)

A square structure (501) was present in the northwest part of the site (Fig. 5; Plate 3). It measured 1.7m by 1.65m and had been cut into the natural alluvium. The west half was excavated to a depth of c.0.45m and it is interpreted as a 19th century cess-pit or the base of an external privy.

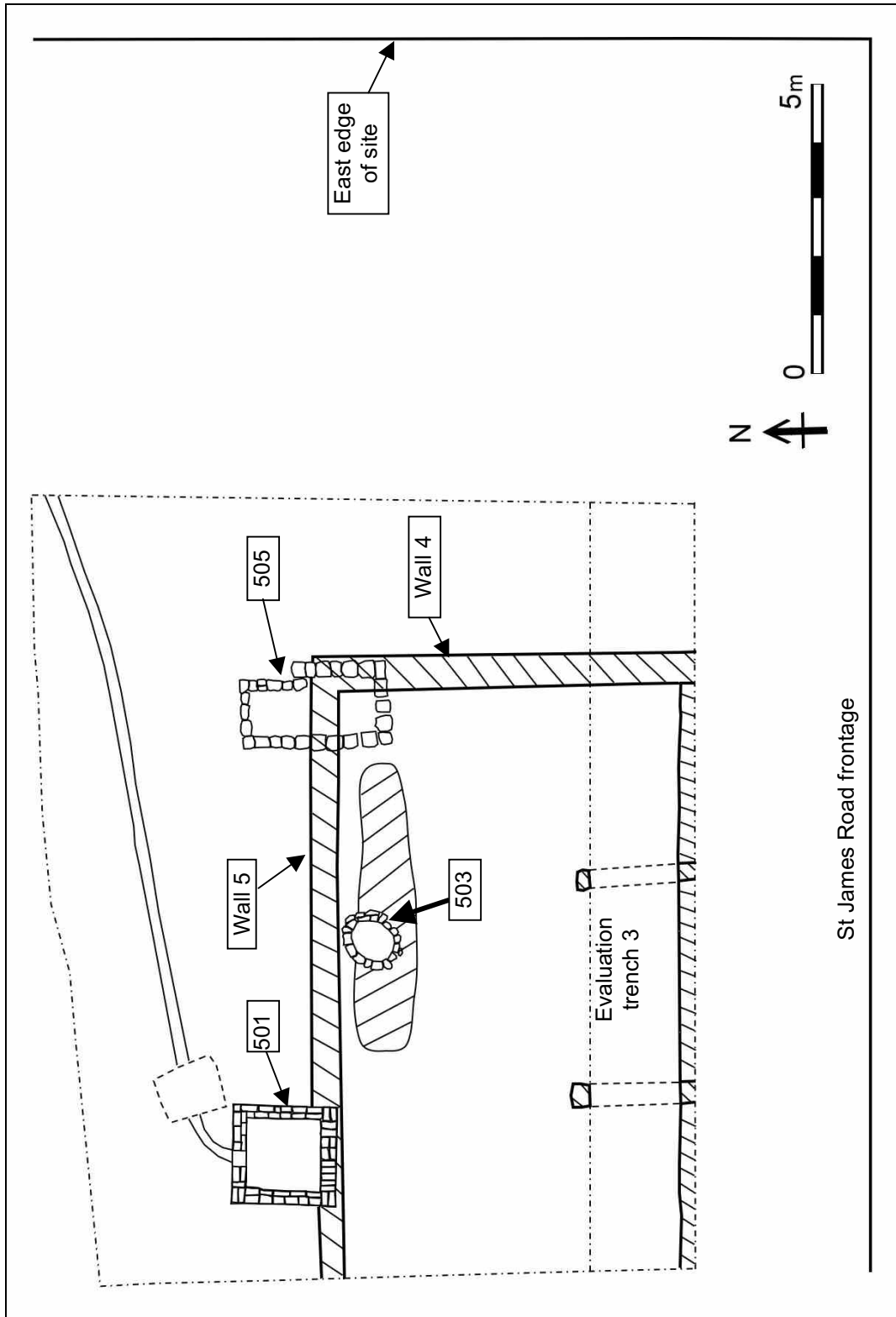


Figure 9: Plan of the excavation area

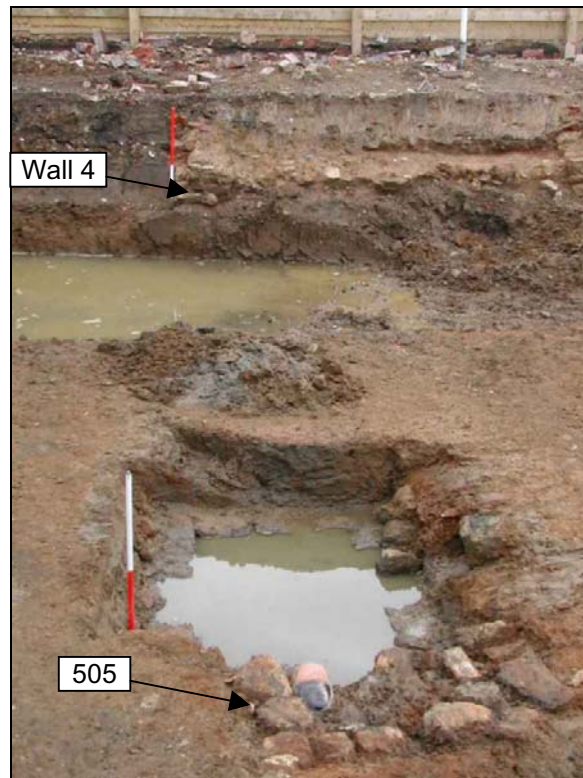


Plate 1: View of the coal-cellar (505) and alignment of Wall 4 (*scales = 1m*)

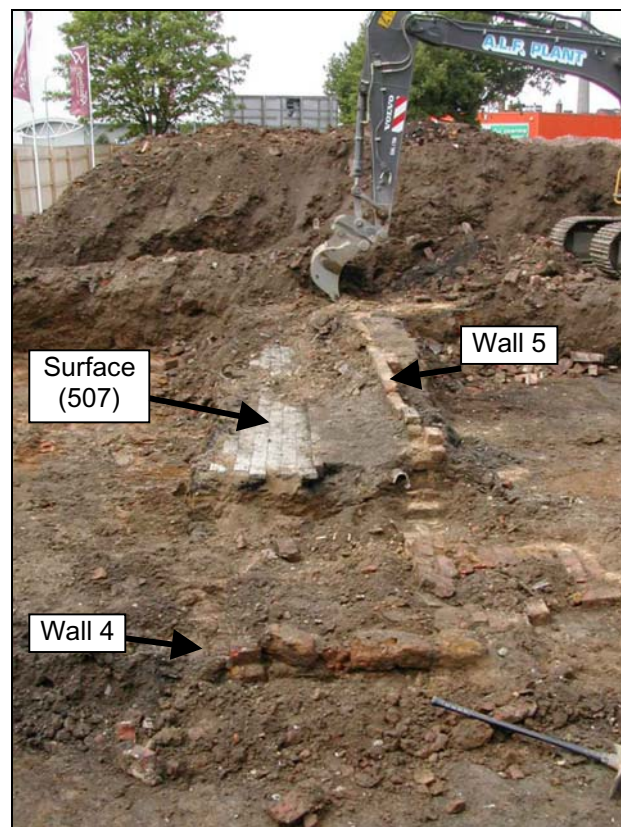


Plate 2: View of Wall 5 and associated structures

Four courses of brickwork in stretcher bond were exposed, bonded with hard beige mortar. The southeast corner had been disturbed, probably during the construction of the 1920s factory. A brick constructed drain ran from the northeast corner of the trench and flowed into the north side of the structure, where a gap of 0.28m in the brickwork was observed.

The cess-pit was filled with wet mid brown silty clay (502). This was a mixed deposit and had been contaminated with diesel oil. It contained a variety of artefacts, including fragments of leather shoes, modern building debris, glass bottles and clay pipe fragments. The fill is a disuse deposit, which probably accumulated after the cess-pit/privy had ceased to function. It is not related to activity associated with the occupation of the 19th century cottages and samples were not taken.

Coal Cellar (505)

A rectangular structure (505), interpreted as a coal cellar was situated at the junction of Walls 4 and 5 (Plate 5). It was in two parts and was partially bonded into Walls 4 and 5 (Fig. 9).

The southern part of the coal cellar was within the areas enclosed by Walls 4 and 5. It measured 1.9m north to south and 1.65m east to west and had been cut into the underlying alluvium. It was constructed of roughly hewn ironstone blocks *c.*0.3m in diameter. The southern wall was badly disturbed, probably by the construction of the overlying factory (section 3.13) and in this area only the lower courses survived. The north part of the coal cellar was narrower (*c.*1m) and 0.9m long but was of similar construction. Both parts had a clay floor which upon which a deposit of coal slack *c.*0.1m thick had accumulated. This deposit did not offer environmental potential and was not sampled.

The cellar was filled with a mixed deposit of brick and tile fragments and pieces of limestone (506). This is a disuse deposit and is not associated with the occupation of the houses. A variety of late 19th and early 20th century artefacts were present, including three decorated clay pipe bowls (including one with a birds foot moulding, of the style of local manufacturer A Roberts, produced *c.*1885-1920 (Moore type 59) and two broken yellow ceramic domestic bowls *c.*1840-1910 (L. Whittingham *pers comm.*).

Well (503)

A well (503) was identified in the northern part of the site *c.*0.5m south of Wall 5 (Plate 6). It was 0.95m in diameter and respected the edge of surface (507). It was constructed of rough ironstone and sandstone blocks and the top three courses were defined.

The well was filled with broken 20th century frogged bricks, probably dumped into during the demolition of the cottages during the 1920s. These are not archaeologically significant and as no material suitable for sampling was present, it was not possible to take samples.



Plate 3 Cess pit/privy base 501 (Scale = 1m)



Plate 4 Sewage pipe



Plate 5: Coal Cellar 505 (*scale = 1m*)

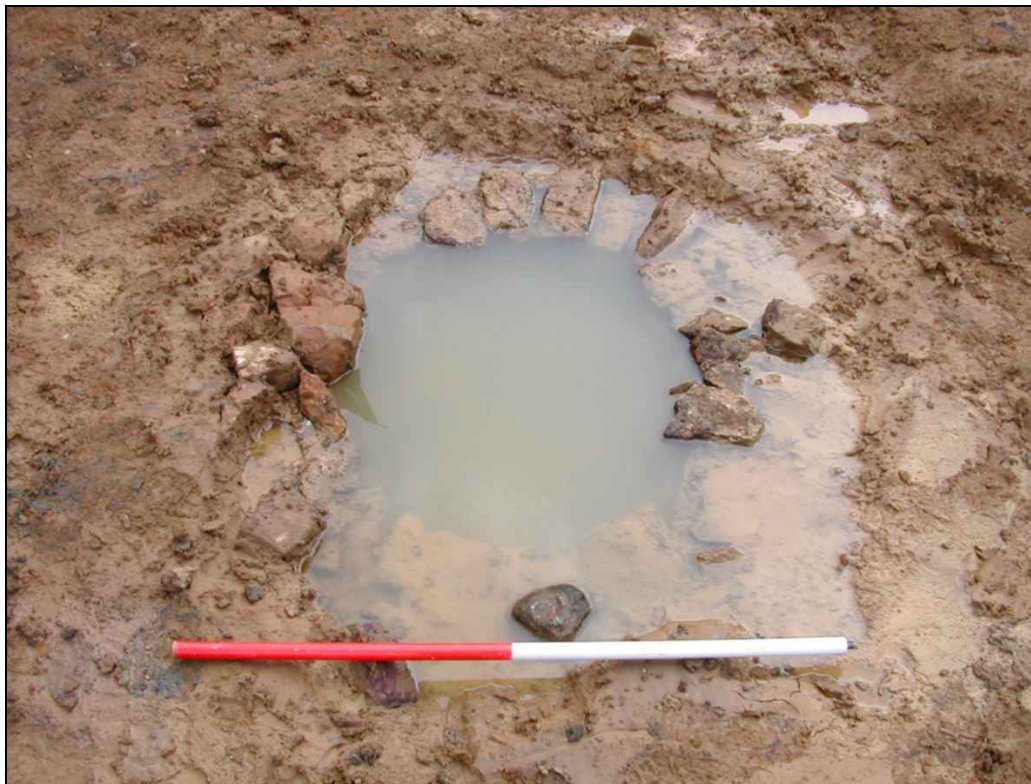


Plate 6: Well 503 (*scale = 1m*)

Surface (507)

A surface (507) was present on the south side of Wall 5. This was constructed of 19th century bricks and is interpreted as an external surface. Well (503) respected this surface and the two are likely to be contemporary.

4.3.3 *20th Century Deposits*

The upper part of the trench profile comprised mixed deposits of modern debris and are interpreted as makeup layers or demolition debris from the former last factory. They were mechanically removed under archaeological supervision, but as they are not relevant to the strip and record excavation, they were not recorded in detail.

5. Conclusions

- 5.1 The strip and record excavation took place between 26th and 28th May 2004. The work took place in good weather conditions and full co-operation was received from the site contractors, who also supplied the machine. A high degree of confidence is attached to the results of the excavation.
- 5.2 The upper part of the profile of the trench comprised deposits associated with the construction and demolition of the last factory, which was constructed in 1928 (section 3.13). These were not relevant to the strip and record excavation and were removed under archaeological supervision, to reveal features associated with the 19th century terraced houses beneath.
- 5.3 The strip and record excavation allowed a limited amount of more detailed information about the terraced houses to be gained. These were probably constructed during the mid 19th and are shown on the 1885 Ordnance Survey map (Fig. 4). The east wall of the east house was recorded to its full length during the excavation (Wall 4) as was the rear wall of the properties (Wall 5). The Ordnance Survey map shows that the houses had open yards to the rear and this was confirmed during the excavation as a brick constructed surface (507) was recorded adjacent to the rear yard wall. The Ordnance Survey map also records two small square structures adjacent to the rear wall (Fig. 4, Structures A and B). These structures coincide with a cess-pit/privy (501), Structure A) and a coal cellar (505), Structure B). A well (503) was found during the excavation, midway between the privy and coal cellar.
- 5.4 The three archaeological features dating to the late 19th century were examined and recorded. A variety of artefacts were recovered from the coal cellar and privy, including leather shoes, clay pipe fragments, glass jars, fragments of ceramic drain pipe, which date to the late 19th to early 20th centuries. The base of the coal cellar was covered with a deposit of coal slack and the well contained only fragments of brick. The coal slack was the only material with dated to the use phases of these structures but did not offer environmental potential. All remaining deposits were disuse deposits and did not relate to the occupation of the buildings.

6. Acknowledgements

The writers are grateful to Mr Matthew Moore for commissioning the evaluation on behalf of *Westleigh Partnership Homes* and to Matthew French of Westleigh for practical assistance on site. Myk Flitcroft BA MIFA, Historic Environment Team Leader of *Northamptonshire County Council* acted as curatorial officer, supported by Graham Cadman BSc MIFA.

The excavation was supervised for *ASC Ltd* Jonathan Hunn BA PhD MIFA. The fieldwork was undertaken by Nigel Wilson HND AIFA, Katie Pack BA MA and David Fell BA MA MIFA. This report was prepared by David Fell and edited by Bob Zeevat BA MIFA.

7. Archive

7.1 The project archive will comprise:

1. Brief
2. Project Design
3. Initial Report
4. Clients site plans
5. Site records
6. Finds records
7. Site record drawings
8. List of photographs/slides
9. Colour slides
10. B/W prints & negatives
11. CDROM with copies of all digital files.

7.2 The archive will be deposited with Northampton Museum.

8. Bibliography

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- IFA 2001 Institute of Field Archaeologists' *Standard & Guidance documents (Desk-Based Assessments, Watching Briefs, Evaluations, Excavations, Investigation and Recording of Standing Buildings, Finds)*.
- Moore W.R.G., 1980 *Northamptonshire Clay Tobacco-Pipes and Pipemakers*. Northampton Museums and Art Gallery
- Soil Survey 1983 *1:250,000 Soil Map of England and Wales, and accompanying legend* (Harpندن).

Appendix 1: Context Register

Context	Type	Description
501	Structure	Four courses of 19 th century red brick, but extending to a greater depth beyond the limit of excavation. Formed a square structure measuring 1.7m by 1.65m. A 19 th century privy or cess pit
502	Fill	Wet mid brown silty clay. This was a mixed deposit and had been contaminated with diesel oil. It contained a variety of artefacts, including fragments of leather shoes, modern building debris, glass bottles and clay pipe fragments. Disuse filling of privy 501
503	Structure	A circular structure, 0.95m in diameter constructed of rough ironstone and sandstone blocks and the top three courses were defined. Respected the edge of surface (507). 19 th century well
504	Fill	Deposit of brick fragments. Debris, possibly from adjacent cottages, deposited within Well 503
505	Structure	A rectangular structure in two parts partially bonded into Walls 4. The southern part was within the areas enclosed by Walls 4 and 5 and was constructed of roughly hewn ironstone blocks. The southern wall was badly disturbed. The northern part, beyond Wall 5 was narrower but was of similar construction. A 19 th century coal cellar.
506	Fill	The cellar was filled with a lower deposit of pure coal slack c.0.1m deep below debris comprising brick and tile fragments and pieces of limestone. A disuse deposit containing a variety of late 19 th and early 20 th century artefacts.
507	Layer	Layer of 19 th century bricks. Yard surface.

Appendix 2: Finds Concordance Register

Context	Glass	Ceramic	Metal	Leather	Miscellaneous Objects
U/S	<p>Bottle: Eight sided possible medicine or tonic bottle with a measuring mark</p> <p>Bottle: Marked '<i>G & G.L. Brown Northampton</i>'</p> <p>Bottle: Amphora shape with iron at the base (remains of a possible stand?)</p>	<p>Ceramic Bottle marked '<i>Foster & Lowis Northampton</i>'</p> <p>2 glazed bowls</p>	Lead/ Tin model of a rabbit?		<p>Clay pipe bowl</p> <p>Arm of a female figurine Torso & legs of a doll?</p>
502	<p>Bottle: carbonated drink bottle marked '<i>Ashford & Co Chemists & Aerated Water Manufacturers 32 Gold St Northampton</i>' & '<i>Lumb & Co Makers Castleford</i>'</p> <p>Bottle: carbonated drink bottle marked '<i>W. Foster Northampton</i>' Worn carbonated drinks bottle, marked '<i>---- mineral water bottle Northampton</i>'</p> <p>Assorted shards of glass dishes, glasses, bottles, oil lamp frags. & a lense.</p>	<p>Ceramic bottle marked '<i>G. Dunelly Northampton</i>'</p> <p>Assorted sherds of ceramic table ware plates, bowls etc. One piece was a terrine lid with a fish shaped handle.</p>		21 frags. of 19 th /early 20 th century shoes	Clay pipe bowl with a corn motif?
506	Small bottle, possibly a medicine bottle marked ' <i>Elly's Dalby's Carmative</i> '	<p>Glazed ceramic storage jar</p> <p>Tile</p> <p>Assorted frags. of storage jars & tableware</p>			<p>Clay pipe bowl decorated with an acorn</p> <p>Clay pipe bowl decorated with a rose & thistle</p> <p>Clay pipe bowl decorated with a claw (birds?), similar to Moore Type 59</p> <p>Two clay pipe stems</p>

The finds do not offer potential for further study and, subject to the agreement of the Historic Environment Team Leader, will be disposed of.

Appendix 3: SMR Summary Sheet

SMR Record Number: TBA	Parish: Northampton St James	Site Name 21 St James Road,
Date of Fieldwork May 2004	Grid ref. SP 745 604	Fieldworker J Hunn
Sponsor Westleigh Developments Ltd	Activity Strip and Record Excavation	
Landowner name/address: Westleigh Developments Ltd Tudorgate Grange Business Park Enderby Road Whetstone Leicester LE8 6EP		
Finds location ASC Ltd	Finds Destination Northampton Museum	
Records location ASC Ltd	Records Destination Northampton Museum	
Finds Quantity Disgarded (subject to confirmation)	Records Quantity 1 small box file	
<p>Summary of Results</p> <p><i>In May 2004 a 'strip and record excavation' was undertaken at 21 St James Road, Northampton. An evaluation showed that remains of a row of terraced houses were on the site and the excavation was required in order to take environmental samples from any 19th century features that may be present. A variety of archaeological remains dating to the late 19th and early 20th centuries were found on the site. Two brick walls, interpreted as the east and north walls of the terraced block were revealed. A number of external features, including a well, privy/cess pit and coal cellar were also recorded. Deposits offering environmental potential were not present on the site.</i></p>		