

AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL
EVALUATION
AT
SITE 7,
EGGHILL REDVELOPMENT,
BIRMINGHAM

Jo Wainwright

With contributions by Angus Crawford

Illustrations by Carolyn Hunt

Revision 1
12th April 2011

© Historic Environment and Archaeology Service,
Worcestershire County Council



Historic Environment and Archaeology Service,
Worcestershire County Council,
Woodbury Building,
University of Worcester,
Henwick Grove,
Worcester WR2 6AJ

Project P3677
Report 1843

Contents

| | |
|-------------------------------|----------|
| Part 1 Project summary | 1 |
|-------------------------------|----------|

Part 2 Detailed report

| | |
|---|----------|
| 1. Planning background | 3 |
| 2. Aims | 3 |
| 3. Methods | 3 |
| 3.1 Documentary search | 3 |
| 3.2 Fieldwork methodology | 3 |
| 3.2.1 Fieldwork strategy | 3 |
| 3.2.2 Structural analysis | 4 |
| 3.3 Artefact methodology, by Angus Crawford | 4 |
| 3.3.1 Artefact recovery policy | 4 |
| 3.3.2 Method of analysis | 4 |
| 3.4 Environmental archaeology methodology | 4 |
| 3.4.1 Sampling policy | 4 |
| 3.5 Statement of confidence in the methods and results | 4 |
| 4. Topographical and archaeological context | 4 |
| 5. Results | 4 |
| 5.1 Structural analysis | 4 |
| 5.1.1 Phase 1: Natural deposits | 5 |
| 5.1.2 Phase 2: Modern deposits | 5 |
| 5.2 Artefact analysis, by Angus Crawford | 5 |
| 6. Synthesis | 5 |
| 6.1 Modern | 5 |
| 6.2 Research frameworks | 5 |
| 7. Significance | 5 |
| 7.1 Significance of a heritage asset with potential archaeological interest | 5 |
| 7.2 Assessment of significance | 6 |
| 8. Publication summary | 6 |
| 9. Acknowledgements | 6 |
| 10. Personnel | 6 |
| 11. Bibliography | 6 |

An archaeological evaluation at Site 7, Egghill Redevelopment, Birmingham

Jo Wainwright

With contributions by Angus Crawford

Part 1 Project summary

An archaeological evaluation was undertaken at Site 7, Egghill Redevelopment, Birmingham (NGR 39993 27876).

The archaeological evaluation was undertaken on behalf of Galliford Try, at the instruction of CgMs Consulting, who intend to erect housing for which a planning consent has been granted with a pre-commencement condition attached requiring a programme of archaeological investigation.

The site assessed was a stretch of an earthwork bund which lies on the eastern side of Frogmill Lane in the Egghill area of Birmingham. It was thought that the development had the potential to disturb deposits related to the line of a former stream which is known from map evidence to have run on the eastern boundary of the site. Three trenches were excavated and in each, the stratigraphy was similar.

A buried soil horizon was excavated directly above the natural clay representing the ground surface before the bund was created after 1964 when Frogmill Road was laid out. Above the redeposited natural clays of the bund was a 21st century topsoil.

No finds or features of archaeological interest were recorded.

Part 2 Detailed report

1. Planning background

An archaeological evaluation was undertaken at Site 7, Egghill Redevelopment (centred on NGR 39993 27876, Birmingham (Fig 1), on behalf of Galliford Try, at the instruction of CgMs Consulting, who intend to erect housing for which a planning consent has been granted with a pre-commencement condition attached requiring a programme of archaeological investigation.

There are no known designated or undesignated heritage assets with archaeological interest on the site. However, the eastern site boundary probably represents a former stream line and may have the potential for the survival of environmental deposits dating from the Prehistoric period. Aerial photographs and find spots suggest prehistoric activity in the vicinity of the site and the stream would have been a natural focus point during this period (Patrick 2011).

The project conforms to the *Standard and guidance for archaeological field evaluation* (IfA 2008)

The project also conforms to a brief prepared by the Planning Archaeologist of Birmingham City Council (Birmingham City Council 2010) and for which a project proposal (including detailed specification) was produced (Patrick 2011).

2. Aims

The aims of this archaeological evaluation are to ensure preservation by record of the archaeological resource.

In particular the excavation must address:

- The survival and nature of archaeological remains on the site;
- The survival and nature of evidence for past environmental conditions;
- The contribution of the site to an understanding of the historic development of this part of Birmingham.

3. Methods

3.1 Documentary search

A desk based assessment was undertaken in 2010 for the Egghill Redevelopment area (Birmingham Archaeology 2010). This only specifically covered areas adjacent to the study area but the general archaeological and historical background covers the site. No other sources apart from this document were consulted.

3.2 Fieldwork methodology

3.2.1 Fieldwork strategy

A detailed specification was prepared by CgMs Consulting (Patrick 2011).

Fieldwork was undertaken between 29 and 30 March 2011. The site reference number and site code is P3677.

Three trenches, amounting to approximately 120m² in area, were excavated over the site. The location of the trenches is indicated in Figure 2. On-site constraints led to Trench 2 being moved approximately 1 metre north from the position specified in the brief.

Deposits considered not to be significant were removed using a 360° tracked excavator under archaeological supervision. Subsequent excavation was undertaken by hand. Clean surfaces were inspected and deposits were recorded according to standard Service practice (CAS

1995). On completion of excavation, trenches were reinstated by replacing the excavated material.

3.2.2 **Structural analysis**

All fieldwork records were checked and cross-referenced. Analysis was effected through a combination of structural and artefactual evidence, allied to the information derived from other sources.

3.3 **Artefact methodology, by Angus Crawford**

3.3.1 **Artefact recovery policy**

The artefact recovery policy conformed to standard Service practice (CAS 1995; appendix 2).

3.3.2 **Method of analysis**

All hand retrieved finds were examined. They were identified, quantified and dated to period. A *terminus post quem* date was produced for each stratified context where possible. The date was used for determining the broad date of phases defined for the site.

3.4 **Environmental archaeology methodology**

3.4.1 **Sampling policy**

The environmental sampling strategy conformed to standard Service practice (CAS 1995; appendix 4). No deposits were deemed worthy of sampling.

3.5 **Statement of confidence in the methods and results**

The methods adopted allow a high degree of confidence that the aims of the project have been achieved.

4. **Topographical and archaeological context**

The site lies on the side of a small hill which slopes down from north-east to south-west. Frogmill Road forms the western boundary and a hollow formed by an old watercourse forms the eastern boundary (Plate 1). The central part of the site has been raised by the formation of a bund which is currently grassed over.

The following is a brief summary (with additions) from the desk-based assessment (Birmingham Archaeology 2010);

The underlying solid geology is comprised of mudstone of the Keele beds formation.

The site was used for agricultural purposes until the middle of the 20th century when the Egghill Farm Housing estate was laid out to the east. After 1964 Frogmill Road was laid out and the houses to the west of the road were constructed. The map regression shows the area has not been developed at all apart from the formation of a bund. This earthwork was likely to have been created when Frogmill Road was laid out.

The possible watercourse, visible on the early Ordnance Survey maps of the area is the only known potential heritage asset within the area, although find spots and evidence from aerial photographs in the broader area suggests prehistoric activity in the area.

5. **Results**

5.1 **Structural analysis**

The trenches and deposits recorded are shown in figs 2-3 and plates 2-5. The results of the structural analysis are presented in Appendix 1.

Similar stratigraphy was excavated in all three trenches.

5.1.1 **Phase 1: Natural deposits**

The natural deposits consisted of pink and occasional blue clays with rounded small to large pebbles, 103, 203 and 303.

5.1.2 **Phase 2: Modern deposits**

Cutting the natural was a series of ceramic land drains. Overlying these and the natural was a buried soil horizon with decayed grass on the top, 102, 202 and 302. This deposit changed to a brown colour when it was exposed to the air.

Above the buried soil horizon was a layer of redeposited natural clays with occasional brick rubble, 101, 201 and 301. This deposit was up to c. 1.90m thick. Overlying this was the topsoil and turf, 100, 200, 300.

5.2 **Artefact analysis, by Angus Crawford**

The artefactual assemblage recovered was of no archaeological significance. While context 102 contained small sherds of post-medieval and modern pottery it also contained a small toy speedboat. This was identified as a 'Meteor Sportsman', produced by the Matchbox Company from 1958 and into the 1960s.

The finds retrieved from context 202 consisted of an undiagnostic fragment of ceramic building material and a small fragment of flat roof tile. The roof tile was of a general appearance consistent with being produced from the post-medieval period onwards and, therefore, could not be accurately dated.

6. **Synthesis**

6.1 **Modern**

The toy speedboat recovered from the buried soil horizon dates from 1958 or after. This soil horizon was presumably the ground surface before the bund was created probably after 1964 when Frogmill Road was laid out. The anaerobic conditions underneath the bund has led to this deposit becoming gleyed and the top part of the natural clays beneath this were discoloured because of leaching from this layer.

Above the bund was the modern topsoil.

No deposits relating to the former watercourse were observed in the trenches.

6.2 **Research frameworks**

As the results of the fieldwork were negative they cannot contribute to local, regional and national research frameworks.

7. **Significance**

7.1 **Significance of a heritage asset with potential archaeological interest**

The aim of an archaeological evaluation is to provide the client and the planning authority (and its advisors) with sufficient information to assess the significance of a heritage asset with archaeological interest, in line with *Planning Policy Statement 5: Planning for the Historic Environment* (DCLG 2010: Policy HE6). More detailed guidance on assessing the significance of site with archaeological interest is set out in the associated *Historic Environment Planning Practice Guide*, which advises that an on-site evaluation should establish the nature, importance and extent of the archaeological interest in order to provide sufficient evidence for confident prediction of the impact of the proposal (DCLG/DCMS/EH 2010: Section 5, Development Management).

7.2 **Assessment of significance**

As a result of the evaluation, it is clear that the area evaluated (Site 7, Egghill) has no archaeological significance.

8. **Publication summary**

The Service has a professional obligation to publish the results of archaeological projects within a reasonable period of time. To this end, the Service intends to use this summary as the basis for publication through local or regional journals. The client is requested to consider the content of this section as being acceptable for such publication.

An archaeological evaluation was undertaken at Site 7, Egghill Redevelopment, Birmingham (NGR 39993 27876).

The archaeological evaluation was undertaken on behalf of Galliford Try, at the instruction of CgMs Consulting, who intend to erect housing for which a planning consent has been granted with a pre-commencement condition attached requiring a programme of archaeological investigation.

The site assessed was a stretch of an earthwork bund which lies on the eastern side of Frogmill Lane in the Egghill area of Birmingham. It was thought that the development had the potential to disturb deposits related to the line of a former stream which is known from map evidence to have run on the eastern boundary of the site. Three trenches were excavated and in each, the stratigraphy was similar.

A buried soil horizon was excavated directly above the natural clay representing the ground surface before the bund was created after 1964 when Frogmill Road was laid out. Above the redeposited natural clays of the bund was a 21st century topsoil.

No finds or features of archaeological interest were recorded.

9. **Acknowledgements**

The Service would like to thank the following for their kind assistance in the successful conclusion of this project, Galliford Try, Cathy Patrick and James Gidman (CgMs Consulting) and Mike Hodder (Planning Archaeologist Birmingham City Council).

10. **Personnel**

The fieldwork and report preparation was led by Jo Wainwright. The project manager responsible for the quality of the project was Tom Rogers. Fieldwork was undertaken by Jo Wainwright and Tim Conrah, finds analysis by Angus Crawford and illustration by Carolyn Hunt.

11. **Bibliography**

Birmingham City Council 2010 *Design Brief for archaeological work in advance of commencement of development, Egghill Site &, Birmingham*, Birmingham City Council unpublished document dated 18 March 2010

Birmingham Archaeology 2010 *Egghill Redevelopment, Birmingham; Archaeological desk-based assessment, Birmingham Archaeology Report PN 2090*

CAS, 1995 (as amended) *Manual of Service practice: fieldwork recording manual*, County Archaeological Service, Hereford and Worcester County Council, report, **399**

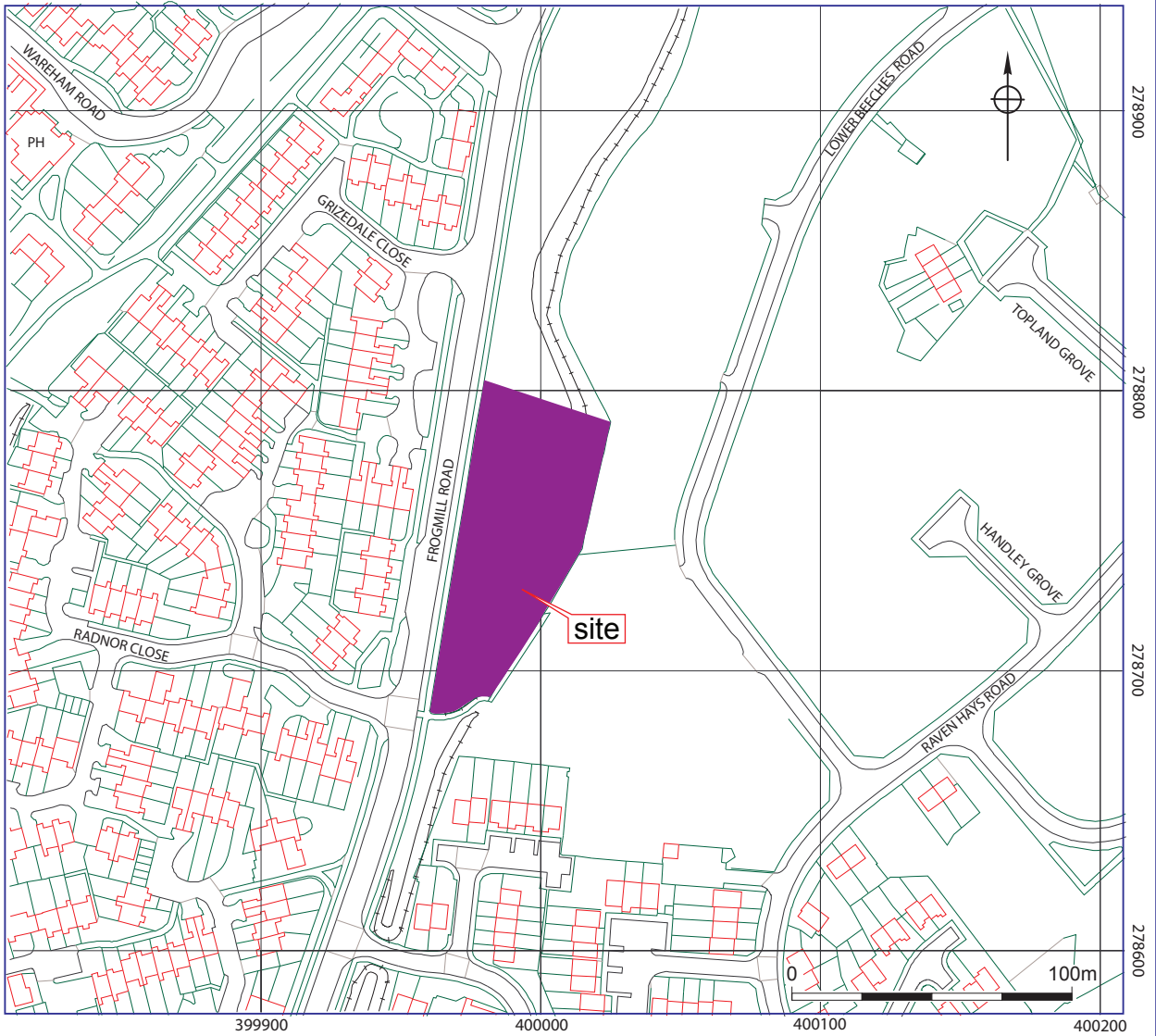
DCLG 2010 *Planning Policy Statement 5: Planning for the historic environment*, Department for Communities and Local Government

DCLG/DCMS/EH 2010 *PPS5 Planning for the historic environment: historic environment planning practice guide*. Department for Communities and Local Government/Department for Culture, Media and Sport/English Heritage

IfA 2008 *Standard and guidance for archaeological field evaluation*, Institute for Archaeologists

Patrick, C, 2011 *Specification for archaeological investigation, Eghill Site 7, Birmingham*, CgMs Consulting, unpublished document dated March 2011

Figures



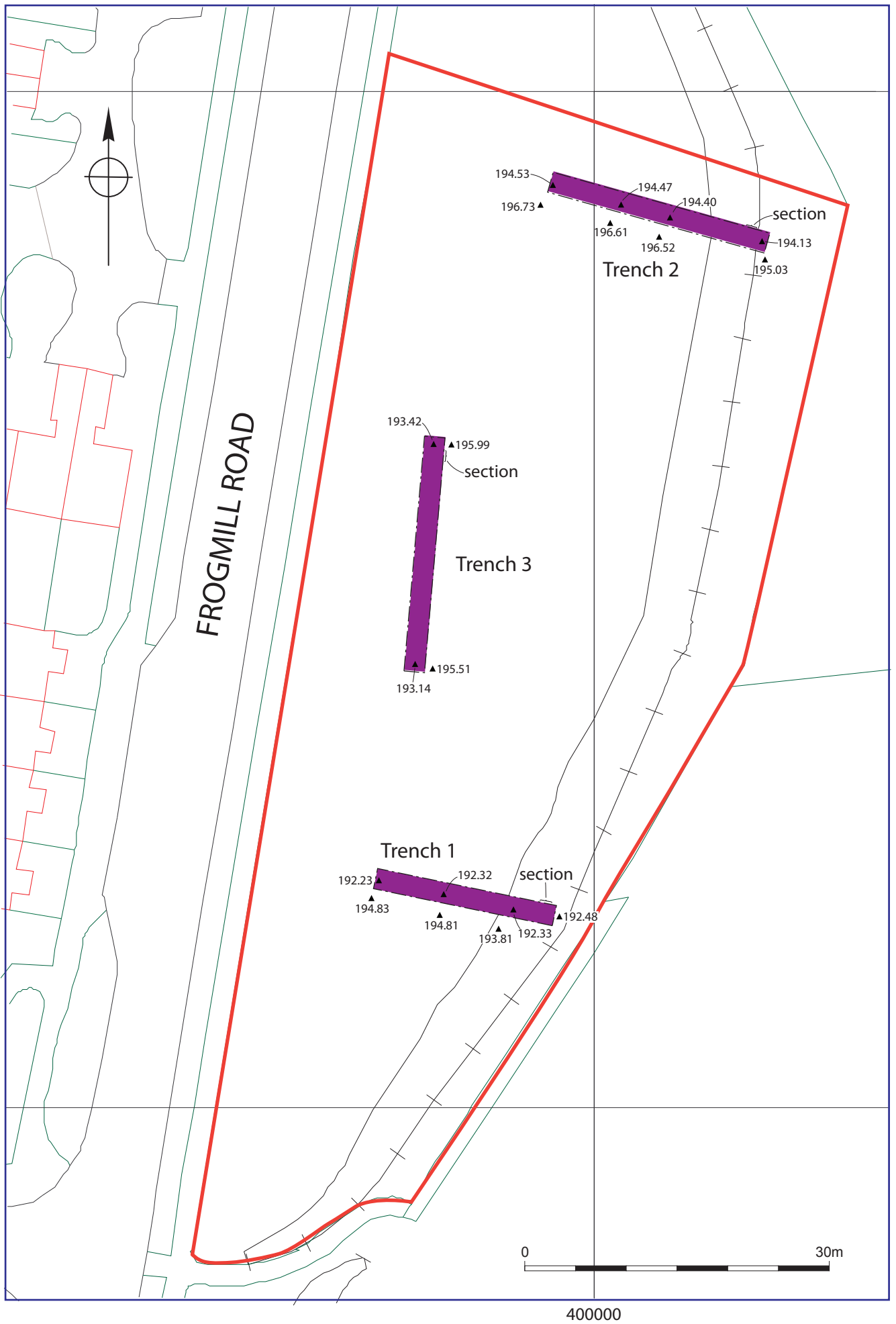
© Crown copyright and database rights 2011 Ordnance Survey 100015914

Location of the site

Figure 1

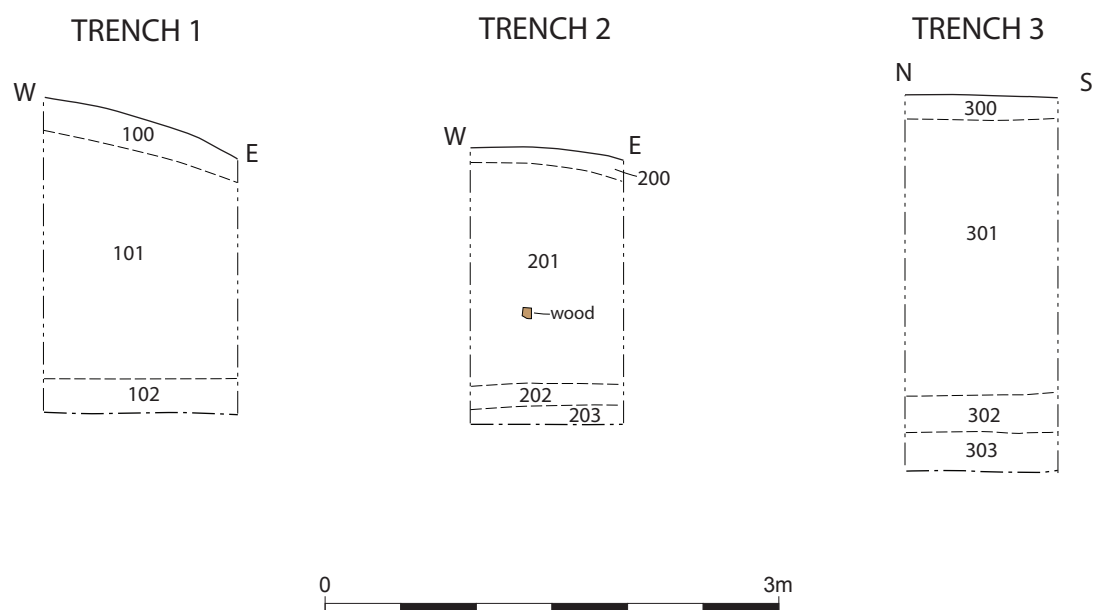
278800

278700



Trench location plan (levels in metres AOD)

Figure 2



Sections

Figure 3

Plates



Plate 1 General view of site with Trench 1 excavation in progress. View north



Plate 2 Trench 1 post-excavation. View east



Plate 3 South facing section of eastern part of Trench 1. Buried soil 102 is at the base of the section. View north.



Plate 4 Trench 2 post-excavation. View east.



Plate 5 Trench 3 post-excavation. View north

Appendix 1 Trench descriptions

Trench 1

Maximum dimensions: Length:18m Width: 1.90m Depth: c.2.70m

Orientation: east to west

Main deposit description

| Context | Classification | Description | Depth below ground surface (b.g.s) – top and bottom of deposits (centre of und) |
|---------|----------------|--|---|
| 100 | Topsoil | Mid red brown silty clay with occasional sub-rounded pebbles and charcoal.. | 0-0.25m |
| 101 | Bund | Mixed redeposited natural pink clay with occasional bands of scalplings, and brick. Occasional sub-rounded pebbles. | 0.25-c. 2.10m |
| 102 | Buried topsoil | Silty clay with occasional sub-rounded pebbles and charcoal. On the top of the deposit was the decayed remains of grass. On edges of bund this turf and topsoil were a mid beige brown in colour but further underneath the bund this deposit became greyer in colour as a result of anaerobic conditions. | c.2.10-2.40m |
| 103 | Natural | Pinkish and occasional blue clays with rounded small to large pebbles. Top part of the natural has been discoloured by leaching of the overlying deposit. | 2.40m+ |

Trench 2

Maximum dimensions: Length:22m Width: 1.90m Depth: c.2.20m

Orientation: east to west

Main deposit description

| Context | Classification | Description | Depth below ground surface (b.g.s) – top and bottom of deposits (centre of und) |
|---------|----------------|--|---|
| 200 | Topsoil | Mid red brown silty clay with occasional sub-rounded pebbles and charcoal.. | 0-0.20m |
| 201 | Bund | Mixed redeposited natural pink clay with occasional bands of scalplings, and brick. Occasional sub-rounded pebbles and wood. | 0.20-c. 1.70m |
| 202 | Buried topsoil | Silty clay with occasional sub-rounded pebbles and charcoal. On the top of the deposit was the decayed remains of grass. On edges of bund this turf and topsoil were a mid beige brown in colour but further underneath the bund this deposit became greyer in colour as a result of anaerobic conditions. | c.1.70-1.90m |
| 203 | Natural | Pinkish and occasional blue clays with rounded small to large pebbles. Top part of the natural has been discoloured by leaching of the overlying deposit. | 1.90m+ |

Trench 3

Maximum dimensions: Length:23m Width: 1.90m Depth: c.2.50m

Orientation: north to south

Main deposit description

| Context | Classification | Description | Depth below ground surface (b.g.s) – top and bottom of deposits (centre of und) |
|---------|----------------|---|---|
| 300 | Topsoil | Mid red brown silty clay with occasional sub-rounded pebbles and charcoal.. | 0-0.17m |

| Context | Classification | Description | Depth below ground surface (b.g.s) – top and bottom of deposits (centre of und) |
|---------|----------------|---|---|
| 301 | Bund | Mixed redeposited natural pink clay with occasional bands of scalplings, and brick. Occasional sub-rounded pebbles. | 0.17-c. 2.00m |
| 302 | Buried topsoil | Grey silty clay with occasional sub-rounded pebbles and charcoal. On the top of the deposit was the decayed remains of grass. | c.2.00-2.25m |
| 303 | Natural | Pinkish and occasional blue clays with rounded small to large pebbles. Top part of the natural has been discoloured by leaching of the overlying deposit. | 2.25m+ |

Appendix 2 Technical information

The archive (site code: P3677)

The archive consists of:

- 2 Field progress reports AS2
- 1 Photographic records AS3
- 48 Digital photographs
- 1 Drawing number catalogues AS4
- 3 Scale drawings
- 1 Levels records AS19
- 3 Trench record sheets AS41
- 1 Box of finds
- 1 CD-Rom/DVDs
- 1 Copy of this report (bound hard copy)

The project archive is intended to be placed at:

Birmingham City Museum and Art Gallery
Chamberlain Square
Birmingham
B3 3DH
Tel 0121 303 2834