

ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING
BRIEF
OF THE TAME SCHEMES:
BAYSTON ROAD,
KINGS HEATH,
BIRMINGHAM

Elizabeth A Plane

Illustrated by Sarah Phear

27 March 2008

© Historic Environment and Archaeology Service,
Worcestershire County Council

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



INVESTOR IN PEOPLE

Project 3133
Report 1607
EBM 358

Archaeological watching brief of the Tame Schemes: Bayston Road, Kings Heath, Birmingham

Elizabeth A Plane

Background information

<i>Client</i>		Severn Trent Water Ltd
	<i>reference</i>	1435_7_39
<i>Site address</i>		land off Jasmin Croft and Bayston Road, Kings Heath, Birmingham
<i>National Grid reference</i>		SP 407241 279447
<i>Sites and Monuments Record reference</i>		EBM 358
<i>Planning authority</i>		Birmingham City Council
	<i>reference</i>	n/a
<i>Project parameters</i>		IFA 2001

Previous archaeological work on the site

An archaeological watching brief was undertaken in 2006 by Birmingham University in connection with the proposed development. Six test-pits were excavated between 2.9m and 3.9m in depth. Sequences of mixed clay deposits were recorded in all test pits. No archaeological layers, features, structures or artefacts were identified, although evidence of alluviation was determined (Halsted 2006).

Archaeological work on associated sites

This project was one of three associated with Severn Trent Ltd's Tame Schemes sewage works along the Chinn Brook. The Service also undertook the additional two archaeological watching briefs, at Cocks Moors Woods and off Yardley Wood Road, Kings Heath. The reports for these sites will be produced separately.

Archaeological and historical background

The ground works were located to the south of Bayston Road, to the west of the Chinn Brook, and to the northwest of the Stratford-upon-Avon Canal. The growth of Alcester Road South in the 19th century is clear from the historic maps. The 1st edition Ordnance Survey map of 1887 shows settlement focused along the present day Alcester Road South, to the east of the site. The Ordnance Survey map of 1938 shows Bayston Road surrounded by enclosed agricultural farmland with a few associated settlements.

The Birmingham Sites and Monuments Record (SMR) contains several records relating to the area. To the east of the site is a Bronze Age burnt mound (MBM 2431). These mounds typically comprise of heat-shattered stones set within a matrix of charcoal-rich soil, often found adjoining stream courses. The proximity to the site of an identified burnt mound, and to the Chinn Brook, indicated a potential for the identification of further burnt mounds. In addition, it was possible that associated features could be revealed. Thus the site was thought to have a limited potential for Bronze Age archaeological remains.

Aims

The aim of the watching brief was to observe and record archaeological deposits, and to determine their extent, state of preservation, date and type, as far as reasonably possible.

Methods

General specification for fieldwork	CAS 1995														
Sources consulted	SMR Ordnance Survey maps: 1884, 1887, 1938														
Date(s) of fieldwork	7 November 2007 to 20 February 2008														
Dimensions of excavated areas observed	<table border="0"> <tr> <td>Access Road</td> <td>length 20m width 4m depth 0.60m</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Topsoil Strip</td> <td>length 14m+ width 10m+ depth 0.20m</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Manhole F1</td> <td>length 5.50m width 4m depth 2m</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Manhole F3</td> <td>length 9m width 0.90m depth 3.5m</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Manhole F5</td> <td>length 5m width 2m depth 1.50m</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Manhole S3</td> <td>length 10m width 8m depth 2m</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Manhole S5</td> <td>length 5m width 2m depth 1.50m</td> </tr> </table>	Access Road	length 20m width 4m depth 0.60m	Topsoil Strip	length 14m+ width 10m+ depth 0.20m	Manhole F1	length 5.50m width 4m depth 2m	Manhole F3	length 9m width 0.90m depth 3.5m	Manhole F5	length 5m width 2m depth 1.50m	Manhole S3	length 10m width 8m depth 2m	Manhole S5	length 5m width 2m depth 1.50m
Access Road	length 20m width 4m depth 0.60m														
Topsoil Strip	length 14m+ width 10m+ depth 0.20m														
Manhole F1	length 5.50m width 4m depth 2m														
Manhole F3	length 9m width 0.90m depth 3.5m														
Manhole F5	length 5m width 2m depth 1.50m														
Manhole S3	length 10m width 8m depth 2m														
Manhole S5	length 5m width 2m depth 1.50m														

Access to or visibility of deposits

Observation of the excavated areas was undertaken during and after machine excavation. Access to deep trenches was not made for safety reasons; observations were restricted to those made from the top of the trench. The exposed surfaces were sufficiently clean to observe well-differentiated archaeological deposits, although any less clear may not have been identified.

The general topsoil strip across the site was dug to a maximum depth of 0.20m (Fig 2), enough to expose some subsoil, but not the natural matrix or any pre-modern deposits. After a site monitoring meeting on 4 October 2007 with Mike Hodder (Planning Archaeologist, Birmingham City Council), it was decided to monitor the excavation of the manholes to observe deeper deposits. Although access to trenches was limited, a high degree of confidence can be offered that the aims of the project have been achieved. In addition, no significant artefacts or any ecofacts were observed within the excavated deposits, which were examined on site.

Deposit description

Access Road / Topsoil Strip

Context	Interpretation	Description	Depth below ground level (top and bottom of deposits)
100	Topsoil	Turfed firm mid greyish brown silt loam with common fine roots and few small gravels.	0.00-0.25m
101	Subsoil	Firm mid brownish red clay silt with few small gravels.	0.25-0.35m
102	Natural	Mid light yellowish brown sandy silt with common	0.35m+

		small gravels mixed with mid reddish brown clay silt and sand.	
--	--	--	--

Manhole F1

Context	Interpretation	Description	Depth below ground level (top and bottom of deposits)
1100	Topsoil	Only visible on east side, stripped off elsewhere. Irregular diffuse boundary with 1101 below. Dark brown silty loam with extensive root. Moderately compact and cohesive. Very occasional small pebbles and modern debris.	0.00-0.25m
1101	Subsoil	Slightly silty orangey brown clay. Very compact and cohesive. Occasional medium pebbles. Irregular boundary with below.	0.25-0.50m
1102	Lens of cobbles	Bedded on Natural 1103. Small pebbles and large sub rounded cobbles. Diffuse boundary with 1103 below. Occasional areas of fine gravels to base. Predating culvert.	0.50-0.75m
1103	Natural	Red clay Keuper Marl with occasional blue clay patches.	0.75m+

Manhole F3

Context	Interpretation	Description	Depth below ground level (top and bottom of deposits)
1000	Topsoil	Only extant in patches where it was not stripped off during development. Compact dark brown sandy silt with frequent modern building rubble, brick fragments, FE waste.	0.00-0.05m
1001	Subsoil and Natural	Light yellowish fawn sandy clay. Compact and cohesive. Frequent small medium sub rounded pebbles. Over mid brownish red clay Keuper Marl.	0.05m+

Manhole F5 / S3 / S5

Context	Interpretation	Description	Depth below ground level (top and bottom of deposits)
1000	Subsoil	Firm mid brownish red clay silt with few small gravels.	0.00-0.25m
1001	Natural	Red clay Keuper Marl with occasional blue clay patches.	0.25m+

Discussion and Conclusions

The topsoil strip only removed 0.20m of topsoil enough to expose some subsoil, but not natural or any pre-modern deposits. It was necessary to monitor the deeper excavations of the manholes to meet the aims of the project.

The access road was revealed a mid grey brown silt loam topsoil (101), recorded as 0.25m deep. Below the topsoil the observed subsoil did not suggest any archaeological features or deposits. The subsoil overlay and sealed the natural matrix. The underlying natural deposit 103 comprised of very

mid light yellowish brown sandy silty clay and was recorded at about 0.35m below the ground surface.

During the excavation of Manhole F2 there was little scope for observation and recording because the trench was narrow and being simultaneously backfilled after excavation. Part of the sections revealed undisturbed subsoil over red clay Keuper Marl.

The sections of the excavated Manhole F1 were visible to observation and recording. Here the topsoil had been previously removed during the stripping, except in the south east side. The boundary between context 1100 and 1101 was irregular and defuse. 1101 comprised of compact silty orangey brown clay. Below this was a layer of cobbles 0.25m thick and was bedded on top of natural clay. No associated archaeological deposits were identified and no artefacts were retrieved.

Excavations of manhole F3 revealed the natural deposit 1001 comprised of very compact and cohesive light yellowish fawn sandy clay and the natural was recorded at about 0.05m, implying further ground reduction in that area. Similar results were observed within both Manhole S5 and F5, and the Chamber, where visible sections revealed 0.25m of subsoil over natural Marl.

No significant archaeological features, horizons or deposits were observed nor were any artefacts recovered. However, there remains a limited potential for the survival of archaeological deposits in those areas of the site not stripped down to natural or otherwise disturbed by the present development.

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 watching brief was undertaken on behalf of Severn Trent Water Ltd at Bayston Road, Kings Heath, Birmingham (NGR SP 407241/ 279447; SMR ref. EBM 358). The observation and recording of archaeological deposits was restricted to areas of ground disturbance associated with construction of new services. No significant archaeological features, horizons or deposits were observed and no artefacts were recovered. However the site was not generally stripped down to natural, so there remains a limited possibility that archaeological deposits survive in areas of the site not disturbed by the present development.

Acknowledgements

The Service would like to thank the following for their kind assistance in the successful conclusion of this project, Alex Jones (Archaeological Consultant, Severn Trent Water Ltd), Joe Laird and Graham Robinson (Severn Trent Water Ltd), Matt Obrey (Site Agent, Tomlinson Construction) and Mike Hodder (Planning Archaeologist, Birmingham City Council).

Bibliography

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

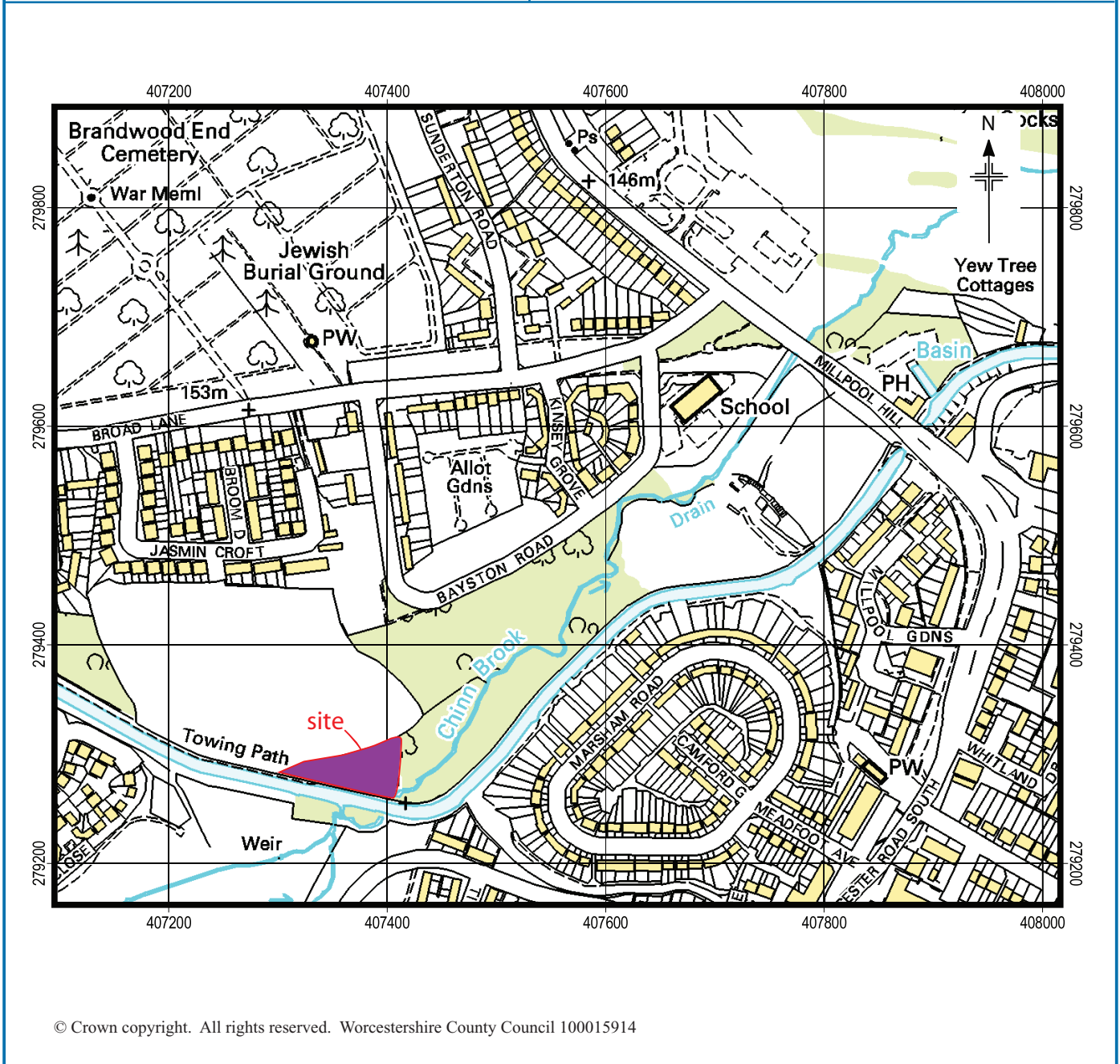
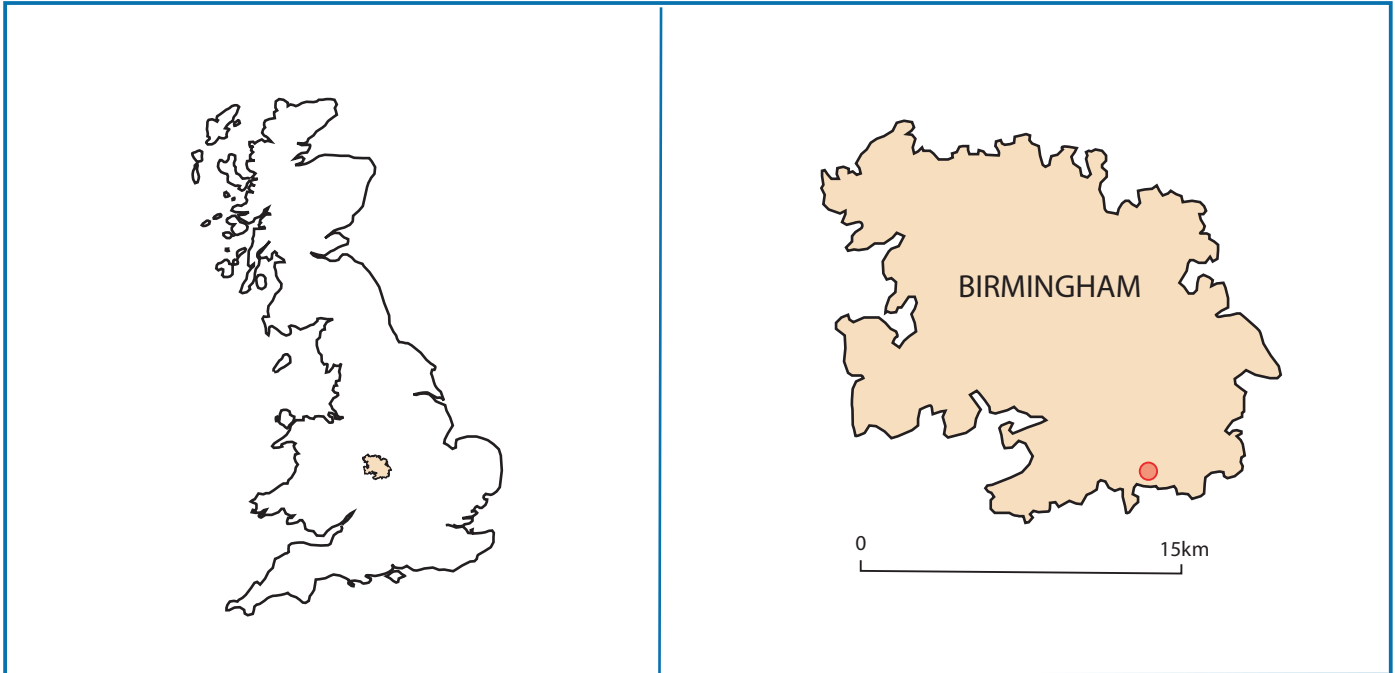
Halsted, J, 2006 *Tame Schemes, Kings Heath, Birmingham: an archaeological watching brief*, Birmingham Archaeology, University of Birmingham, unpublished report dated 2006, **PN 1522**

HEAS, 2007 *Proposal for an archaeological watching brief of the Tame Schemes, Bayston Road, Kings Heath, Birmingham*, Historic Environment and Archaeology Service, Worcestershire County Council, unpublished document dated 21 August 2007, **P3133**

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

STW, 2007 *Tame Schemes, Bayston Road Kings Heath, Birmingham. Specification for archaeological field work and associated reporting*, Severn Trent Water Archaeology Framework, unpublished document dated 27 July 2007, **1435_7_39**

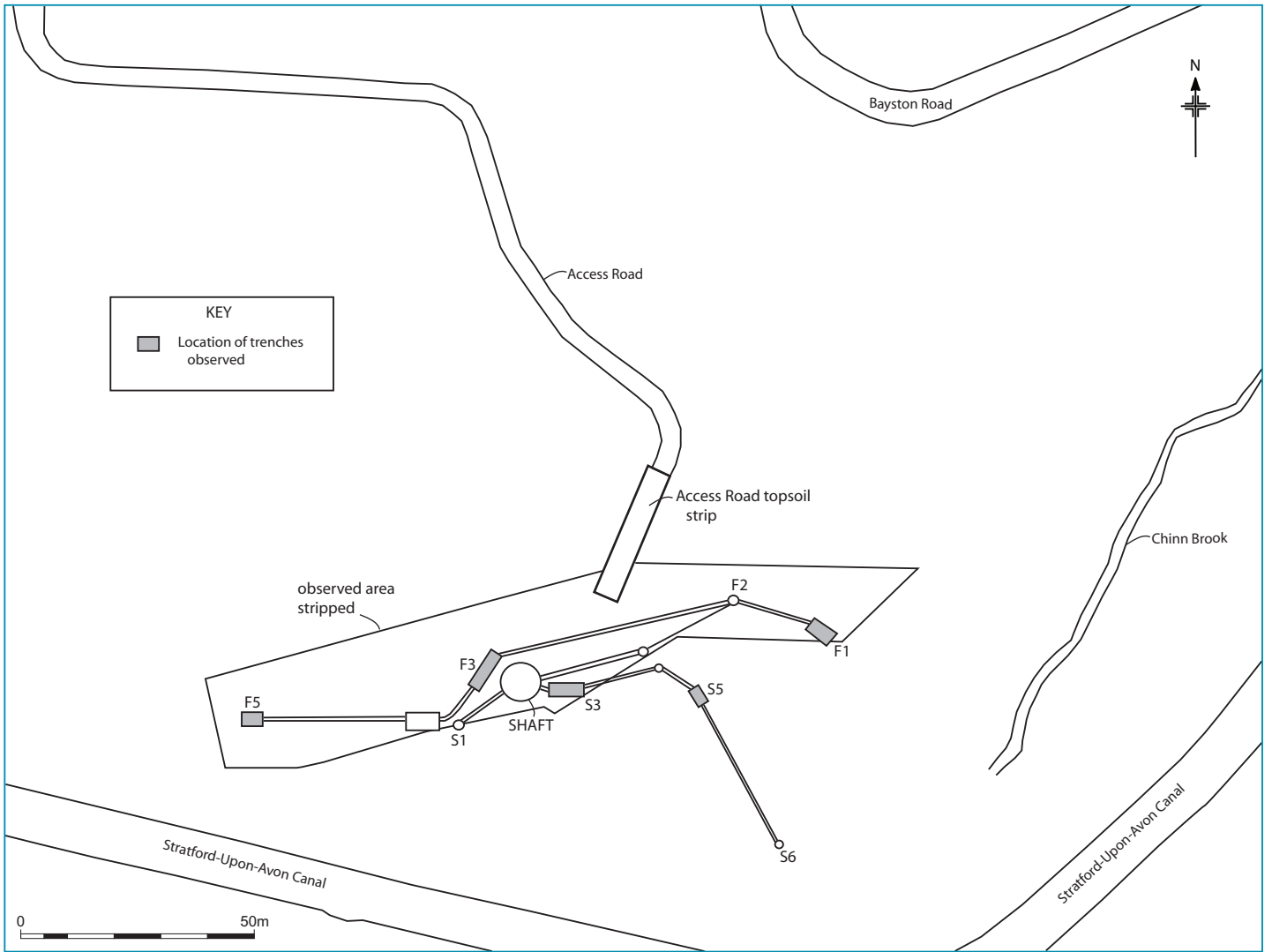
Figures



© Crown copyright. All rights reserved. Worcestershire County Council 100015914

Location of the site

Figure 1



Trenches and stripped areas observed during the watching brief

Figure 2

Plates



Plate 1: West end of initial strip for access road, facing west



Plate 2: Area at south of access road, facing north east



Plate 3: Area at south of access road, facing south west



Plate 4: General shot of Site after topsoil strip, facing east



Plate 5: General shot of Site after topsoil strip, facing east



Plate 6: Northwest facing section of excavation for Manhole F1



Plate 7: General shot of manhole F1, facing south east



Plate 8: South facing section of trench for Manhole F2



Plate 9: General shot of trench with box, west of Manhole F2

Appendix 1 Technical information

The archive

The archive consists of:

15	Fieldwork progress records AS2
2	Photographic records AS3
44	Digital photographs
4	Trench record records AS41
6	Scale drawings
1	Computer disk

The project archive is intended to be placed at:

Birmingham City Museum and Art Gallery
Chamberlain Square
Birmingham
B3 3DH

Tel. Birmingham (0121) 303 2834

Fax Birmingham (0121) 303 1394