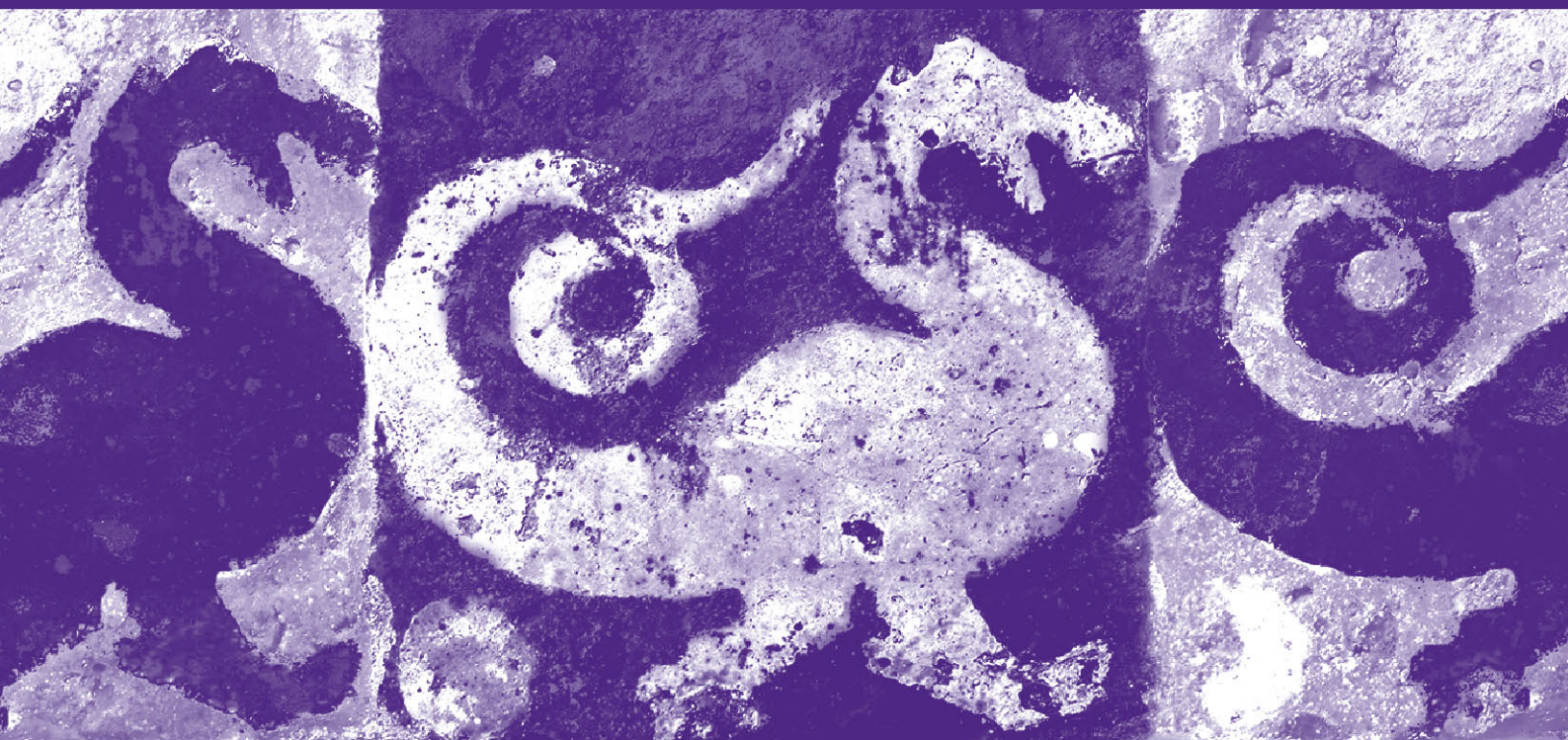


DESK-BASED ASSESSMENT  
OF LAND NORTH OF  
BRETTELL LANE, BRIERLEY  
HILL, DUDLEY



# DESK-BASED ASSESSMENT OF LAND NORTH OF BRETTELL LANE, BRIERLEY HILL, DUDLEY

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Illustrations by Steve Rigby

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Project 3786  
Report 1891



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## **Desk-based assessment of land off Brettell Lane, Brierley Hill, Dudley**

**Darren Miller**

### **Summary**

A desk-based assessment was undertaken on the site of the former Lloyds chain-making factory off Brettell Lane, in Brierley Hill, Dudley (NGR SO 90578 86400). It was undertaken on behalf of Taylor Wimpey Midlands who intend to submit a planning application for a housing development.

The report draws upon and updates an earlier assessment by Waterman CMP Ltd. It describes and assesses the significance of potential heritage assets that may be affected by the application. The potential impact of the application, and the need for further on-site evaluation, are also assessed.

In summary, the assessment identified the potential for significant heritage assets in the south of the application site, in the form of the buried remains of late 18<sup>th</sup> century limekilns and associated buildings. The limekilns and buildings are shown on historic maps, although it is not clear whether their remains have survived successive 20<sup>th</sup> century developments. A field evaluation is recommended to resolve the issue and, if necessary, inform future mitigation.

# Report

## 1. Background

### 1.1 Reasons for the project

A desk-based assessment was undertaken of land north of Brettell Lane, in Brierley Hill, Dudley (NGR SO 90578 86400). It was undertaken on behalf of Taylor Wimpey Midlands who intend to submit a planning application for a housing development.

The project conforms to a proposal prepared by the Service (HEAS 2011). It also conforms to the Institute of Archaeologists' *Standard and guidance for archaeological desk-based assessment* (IfA 2008).

### 1.2 Aims

The aims of this desk-based assessment were:

- to describe and assess the significance of heritage assets within the application site;
- to establish the nature, importance and extent of heritage assets;
- to assess the impact of the application on heritage assets.

### 1.3 Methods

#### 1.3.1 Documentary research

Information on the history of the site and past land-use was collected and assessed. Records of archaeological sites and monuments were obtained from the Dudley Historic Environment Record. Maps and archives were consulted at Dudley Archives. Other maps and aerial photographs were consulted on Dudley Metropolitan Council's website (<http://gismo.dudley.gov.uk/public/historic/Default.asp>). Secondary sources were consulted at the Worcestershire History Centre. Other sources were obtained from the Client (a report on ground investigations, a constraints plan, and an outline plan of the proposed development).

The results are described below and illustrated on Figures 2-7.

#### 1.3.2 Walkover survey

On the 3<sup>rd</sup> of December 2011, the application site was inspected on foot, for about an hour, in dry, bright conditions. The aim of this survey was to assess the current condition of the application site, identify any upstanding heritage assets and note any features, such as surfaces and services, that might have a bearing on buried heritage assets. Photographs were taken with a digital camera, and the location of each photograph was marked on a recent survey provided by the Client. Selected photographs are reproduced below as Plates 1-8.

## 2. The application site

### 2.1 Location

The application site is in Brierley Hill, around 1.5km south-west of the town centre (Fig 1). It comprises some four hectares of land on the west side of the Stourbridge canal. It is bounded to the north by a footpath, to the south by waste ground, and to the west by houses on Westwood Street. A narrow tongue of land projects southwards to Brettell Lane.

### 2.2 Topography

The land within 100m of the canal is level, at around 109m above Ordnance Datum (Plate 1). Beyond this point, however, the land slopes steeply to the west, and moderately to the south-west (Plates 4 and 5). The western scarp is particularly steep, having a gradient of nearly one

in four metres. The scarp represents a fault-line between coal-bearing shales and clays to the east and marl to the west (Geological Survey of England and Wales 1967). As noted in the previous assessment, however, the scarp has been considerably modified by post-medieval coal extraction (WCPM 2007, 4). The soils of the area have not been surveyed.

### 2.3 **Current land-use**

The application site has not been managed since the Lloyds factory was demolished in 2007. The level ground next to the canal is still surfaced with concrete, in some places up to 300mm thick (Wardell Armstrong 2011, 42). The only upstanding features, except for piles of brick and concrete rubble, are brick walls along the southern boundary of the application site (Plates 2 and 3) a slightly raised concrete platform in the centre of the site, and a smaller concrete structure to the south-east. The western and south facing scarps are covered in trees and shrubs (Plates 4 and 5).

## 3. **Heritage assets**

In accordance with current planning guidance (DCLG 2010), the term 'heritage asset' is used in this report to denote components of the historic environment that have significance because of their historic, archaeological, architectural or artistic interest. Heritage assets include designated assets such as Scheduled Ancient Monuments and Listed Buildings, and undesignated assets that may be of equal significance. The term 'potential heritage asset' is used to denote undesignated assets that may exist in the form of buried archaeological remains.

### 3.1 **Designated heritage assets**

There are no designated heritage assets within or near the application site. The Dudley Historic Environment Record shows three monuments in the area: the Stourbridge Canal and Bull Bridge along the east side of the application site (DDUE 5864); the site of Bagues Glasshouse, an 18<sup>th</sup> century glass works immediately to the south-west (DDUE 4817); and the site of Brettell Lane Colliery, a 19<sup>th</sup> century coal mine on the same site (DDUE 7938). All three monuments have been designated on the basis of historical, rather than material evidence.

### 3.2 **Potential heritage assets**

#### 3.2.1 **Limekilns and associated buildings**

The application site may contain remains of late 18<sup>th</sup> or early 19<sup>th</sup> century limekilns and associated buildings. These remains, and especially any remains of the limekilns, would be regarded as heritage assets of archaeological interest.

The presence of limekilns on the site by 1812 is indicated by James Sherriff's 'Plan of the Mines of Lord Dudley and Others..' (Fig 2). Three limekilns are indicated by cross-like symbols between the canal and two cone-like symbols representing glasshouses (Bagues Glasshouses).

What may be the same limekilns are shown on the Ordnance Survey's First Edition map of 1884 (Fig 4). The map shows a block or 'battery' of three kilns in the south of the application site, approximately 15-35m from the canal and 95m north of Brettell Lane (Fig 7; Plate 6). It also shows a wharf to the east of the kilns, beside a tramline heading north; a group of buildings to the west of the kilns, another group of buildings further to the west; and a causeway that connected the kilns to a coal shaft just outside the site. The kilns are labelled 'Limekilns' and the whole complex is labelled 'Brick Works'.

A map made by William Fowler in 1822, shows several buildings in the same area (Fig 3). The kilns are not evident, but according to a map and award cited by Waterman CPM Ltd, in 1824 the site contained 'a house, garden, and lime kilns' belonging to a Joseph Timmins (WCPM 2007, 6).

The Second Edition Ordnance Survey map of 1903 shows few changes since the 1880s (Fig 4). The kilns are labelled 'Old Limekilns', however, implying that they were no longer used. New buildings are shown near the south-west corner of the site, and hachures attest to landscaping elsewhere.

The Third Edition Ordnance Survey map of 1919 reflects a major change in use across the site (Fig 5). As the label 'Brettell Lane' Colliery (Disused) indicates, and other details imply, the site was given over to mining for a brief period after 1903. The wharf was retained, as were the 'new' buildings near the south-west corner, but the kilns and the buildings beside them were removed. Hachures indicate a wedge-shaped declivity where the buildings had stood, and it appears that the foundations had been grubbed-out. The east side of the declivity cut across the footprint of two of the kilns, implying a degree of truncation.

### 3.2.2 **Twentieth century features**

Remains of 20<sup>th</sup> century land-use are increasingly being regarded as heritage assets of archaeological interest, but it is unlikely that the site contains any significant remains of this period. The railway shown on the Third Edition Ordnance Survey map of 1919 is unlikely to have survived the landscaping indicated by the Fourth Edition map of 1938 (Fig 5), or the construction of two successive factories (Figure 6). Remains of both factories will have survived, but are probably unremarkable and uninformative, as both buildings were utilitarian structures of no architectural merit (WCPM 2007, 10; aerial photographs online at <http://gismo.dudley.gov.uk/public/historic/Default.asp>). A brick wall along part of the south-west boundary of the site probably formed part of the earlier factory, built in the 1940s, but has no distinguishing characteristics (Plate 2). A later length of wall on the same boundary is more decorative, with a concrete coping and chamfered plinth (Plate 3), but is only a fragment and hardly significant.

### 3.2.3 **Prehistoric, Roman, and medieval deposits**

There is little potential for remains of prehistoric, Roman, or medieval date. There is a context for activity in the area in each of these periods (WCPM 2007, 5), and especially for medieval activity, but the impact of later land-use makes it very unlikely that earlier remains will have survived. It is possible that pre-modern deposits have been deeply buried by modern made ground but the results of recent ground investigations show no evidence of this (WCPM 2007, Appendix 5).

## 4. **Summary of significance**

### 4.1 **Potential heritage assets**

The only potential heritage assets of any significance identified in this assessment are the buried remains of the limekilns and associated buildings described above. Assuming they survive, at least to some extent, their significance can be expressed in the following terms.

### 4.2 **Assessment of significance**

#### *Nature of the archaeological interest*

The limekilns and associated buildings represent a complete limeworks, probably built soon after the construction of the Stourport Canal in 1779. Limeworks were a distinctive and relatively early feature of the Industrial Revolution, as they provided essential material for mortar, plaster, cement, and industrial processes such as ironworking, gas manufacture, tanning and dyeing (Goad 2005, 98-102 and 111-113). The limeworks on the present site was typical in being established close to sources of coal and limestone and beside a canal, which facilitated transport (Crossley 1990, 210). The kilns themselves also seem to have been typical of the period, being 'horseshoe' kilns arranged in a linear block or battery for maximum efficiency and output. Like other kilns, they were also provided with ramps to facilitate 'charging' the kilns with mixed coal and limestone. They can therefore be identified as 'intermittent' kilns of a mixed-feed type, like three recently excavated kilns in a similar location at Selly Oak (Goad 2005). The kilns at Selly Oak formed part of a battery of five,

built in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century. They were the same shape as those shown on the Ordnance Survey maps of 1884 and 1903, but slightly smaller, being about 6m long by 3m wide. The mapped kilns appear to have been about 10m long and 4m wide. All the excavated kilns had substantial foundations of brick and stone, up to 1.20m deep, notwithstanding modern truncation. The foundations supported domed superstructures, and the spaces between them were filled with earth. As noted above, the buildings associated with the kilns included a house, recorded in 1824. The other buildings were probably used for storage. The remains of these buildings are likely to be less substantial than those of the kilns.

#### *Relative importance of the archaeological interest*

Remains of the limekilns would be considered very important. Archaeological knowledge of limekilns is not advanced and largely based on evidence from field survey. Few limekilns have been excavated and the Sell Oak kilns are so far the only examples from the West Midlands. If the remains suggested by the maps have survived, they would therefore represent a rare type of monument from which a good deal could be learned.

The remains of the other buildings, if they have survived, would also be considered important by association. Only the kilns were excavated at Selly Oak, and not the buildings and yards nearby, which could have provided more information on the history of the limeworks.

#### *Extent of the archaeological interest*

The limekilns and associated buildings occupied the south part of the application site, an area measuring approximately 85m from east to west and 70m from north to south (Fig 7; Plates 6-8). The limekilns themselves covered a smaller area measuring approximately 20m north-south by 10m east-west.

The rest of the application site is unlikely to be of any archaeological interest.

## 5. **Potential impact of the development**

The potential impact of the development on the remains inferred above can be considered in relation to an outline layout plan provided by the Client (Fig 8).

According to the plan, remains of the southern kiln in the battery would probably be affected by the construction of the house in Plot 13 (using pre-cast concrete driven piles, rather than strip foundations, as suggested in Wardell-Armstrong 2011, 43). The remains of the other kilns, and the associated buildings, would not be affected unless they were close to the surface and the area were to be significantly reduced. Remains of the buildings nearest the kilns would lie beneath a road from Brettell Lane, and remains of the buildings to the west would lie to the north-west of Plot 9.

## 6. **Recommendations**

The desk-based assessment has identified the potential for significant heritage assets in the south of the application site, in the form of the buried remains of late 18<sup>th</sup> century limekilns and associated buildings. Although the nature of the remains can be inferred, it is not known whether they have survived truncation by later landscaping and construction. In view of this uncertainty, and the potential impact of the development, the Client may wish to consider commissioning a field evaluation (sample trenching) in the south of the site. This would resolve the matter and, if remains did survive, would inform appropriate mitigation. In the light of this assessment, a field evaluation may be required as a condition of planning consent, as may a watching brief on groundworks in archaeologically-sensitive areas.

## 7. **Publication summary**

The Service has a professional obligation to publish the results of archaeological projects within a reasonable period of time. To this end, and unless directed otherwise, the Service intends to publish the following summary in the most appropriate journal or journals.

*In December 2011, the Archaeology Service of Worcestershire County Council undertook a desk-based assessment of land north of Brettell Lane in Brierley Hill, Dudley (NGR SO 90578*

86400) to support a planning application by Taylor Wimpey Midlands. The assessment identified the potential for significant heritage assets in the south of the application site, in the form of the buried remains of late 18<sup>th</sup> century limekilns and associated buildings. The limekilns and buildings are shown on historic maps, although it is not clear whether their remains have survived successive 20<sup>th</sup> century developments. A field evaluation was recommended to resolve the issue and, if necessary, inform future mitigation.

## 8. **Acknowledgements**

The Service would like to thank the Katie Price of Taylor Wimpey Midlands, Jennifer Mincher of Dudley Historic Environment Team, and the staff of Dudley Archives and Worcestershire History Centre following for their kind assistance.

## 9. **Personnel**

The assessment was researched and written by Darren Miller. The illustrations were drawn by Steve Rigby. The project manager responsible for the quality of the project was Tom Rogers.

## 10. **Sources**

### *Maps*

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Sherriff, J, 1812 'Plan of the Mines of Lord Dudley and Others, situate in the Parishes of Wolverhampton, Bilston, Wednesbury, Tipton, Sedgeley, Kinswinford and Rowley in the County of Stafford; Dudley and Old Swinford in the County of Worcester; and Halesowen in the County of Salop, 1812. Taken by James Sherriff' (copy on display at Dudley Archives)

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*Aerial photographs*

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## Plates



*Plate 1: East side of application site, facing north-east*



*Plate 2: Brick wall along southern boundary*



*Plate 3: Truncated brick wall along southern boundary*



*Plate 4: West-facing scarp*



*Plate 5: South-facing scarp*



*Plate 6: Facing north across footprint of limekilns and wharf*



*Plate 7: Facing north across footprint of buildings near limekilns*



*Plate 8: Facing north across footprint of western group of buildings*

**Figures**

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Location of the site

Figure 1

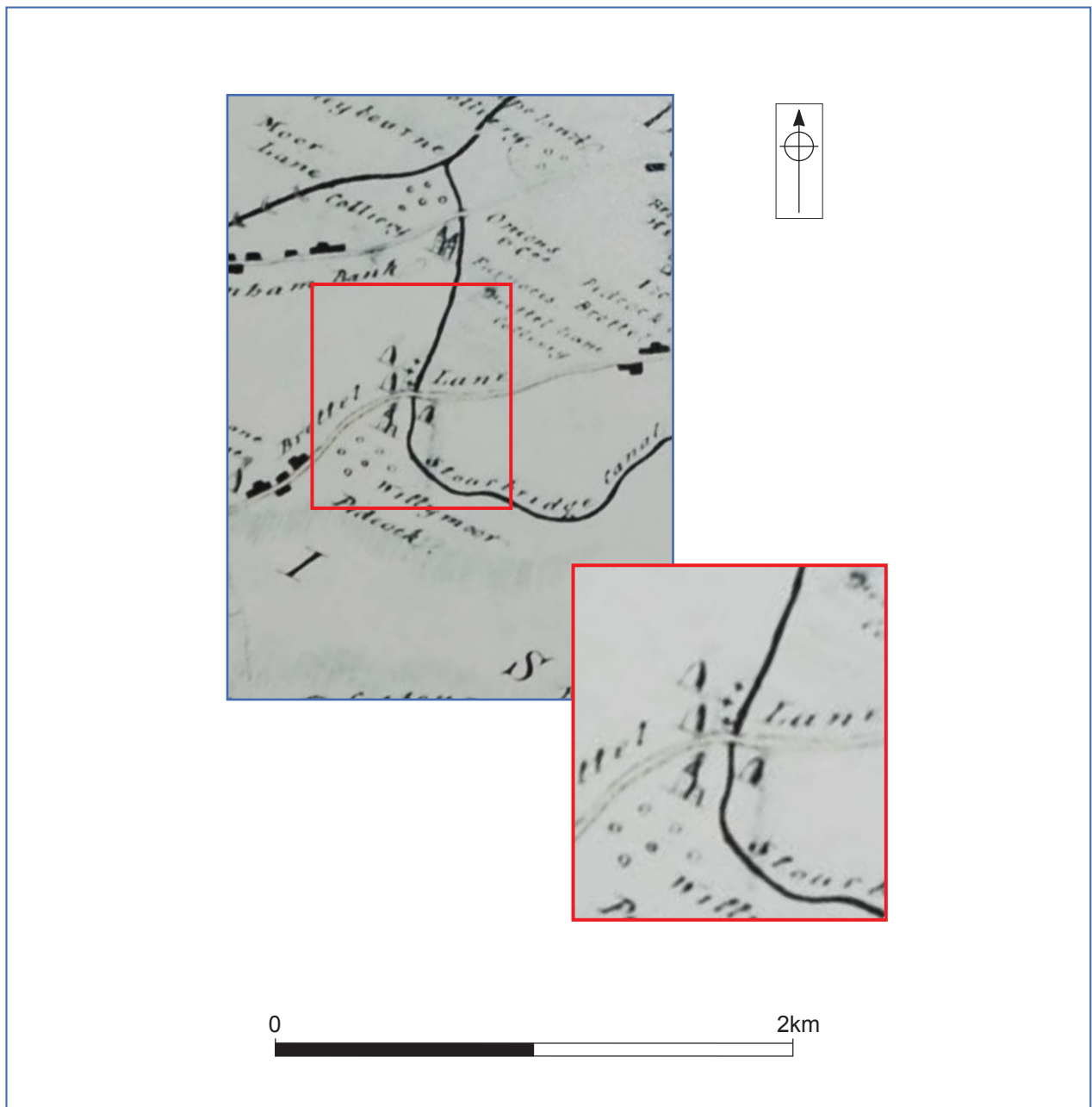
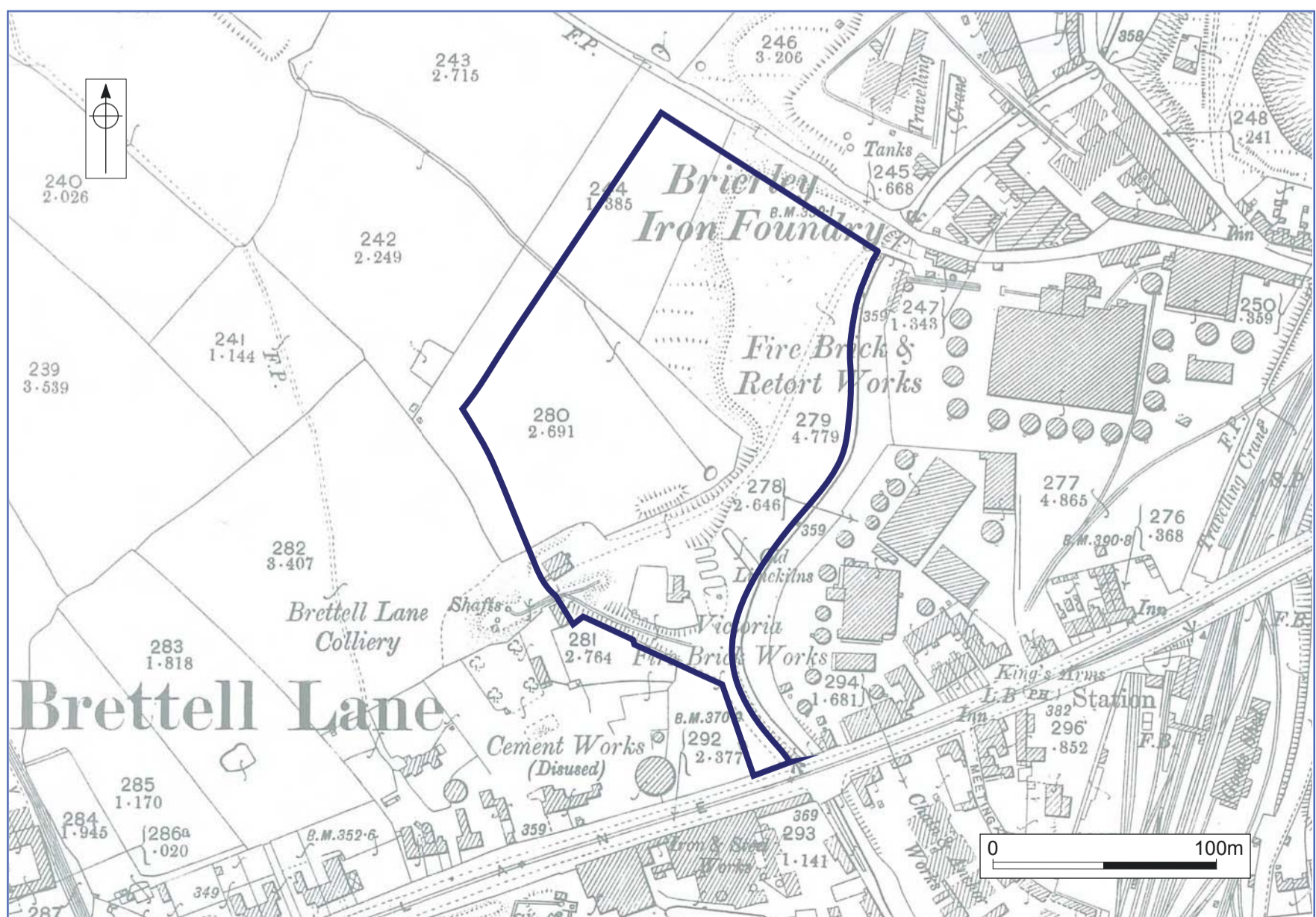
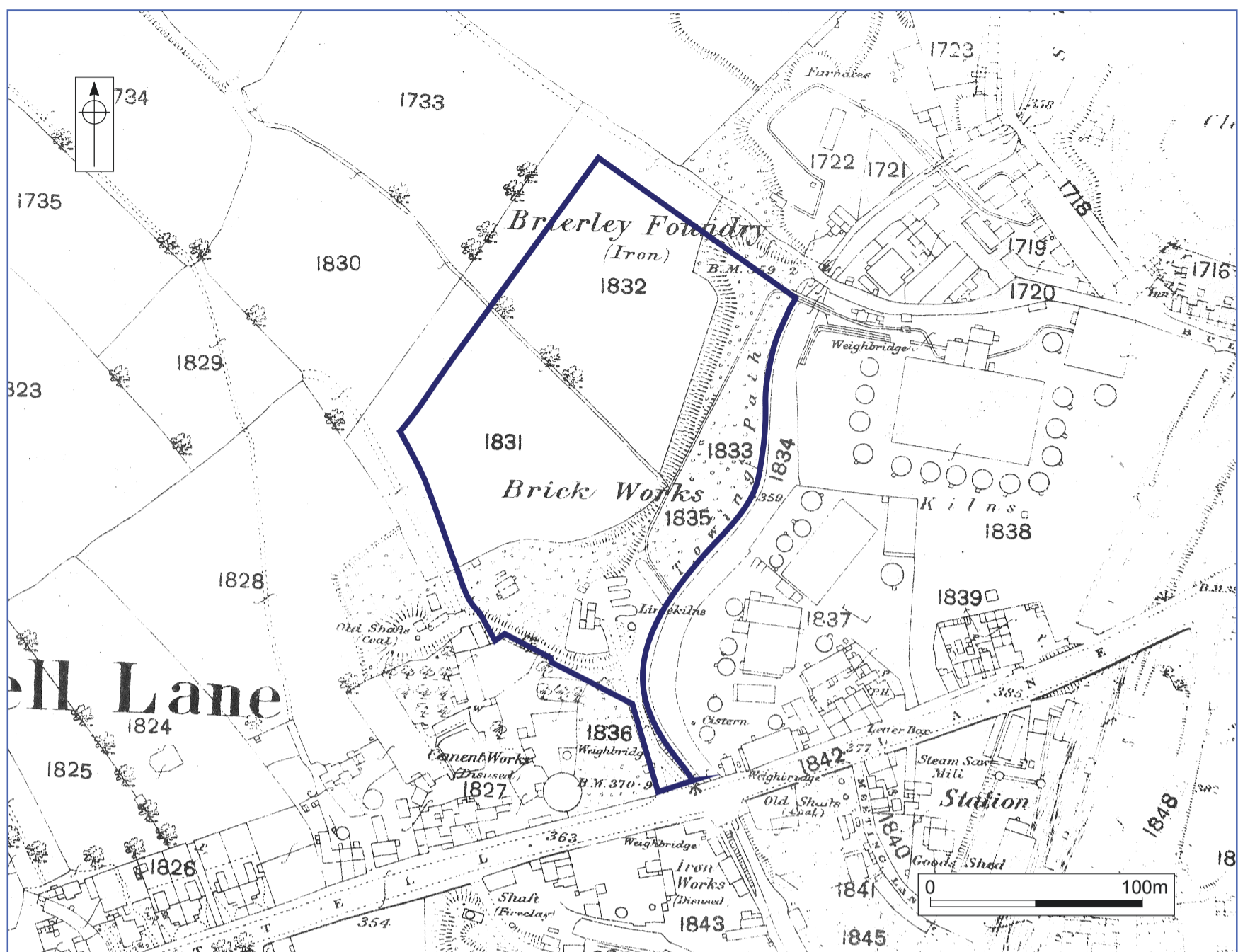


Figure 2: Extracts from Sherriff 1812



Figure 3: Extract from Fowler 1822



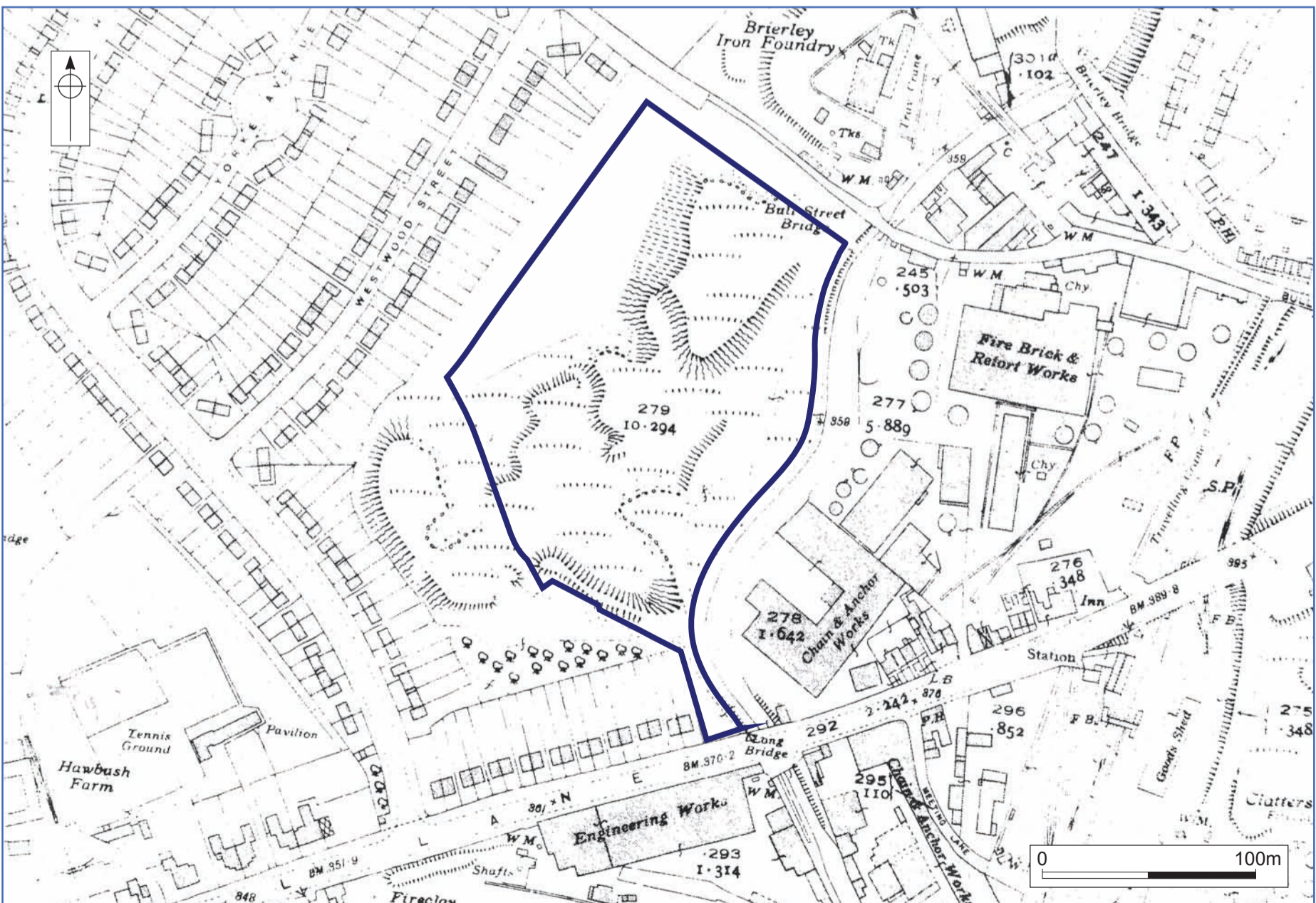
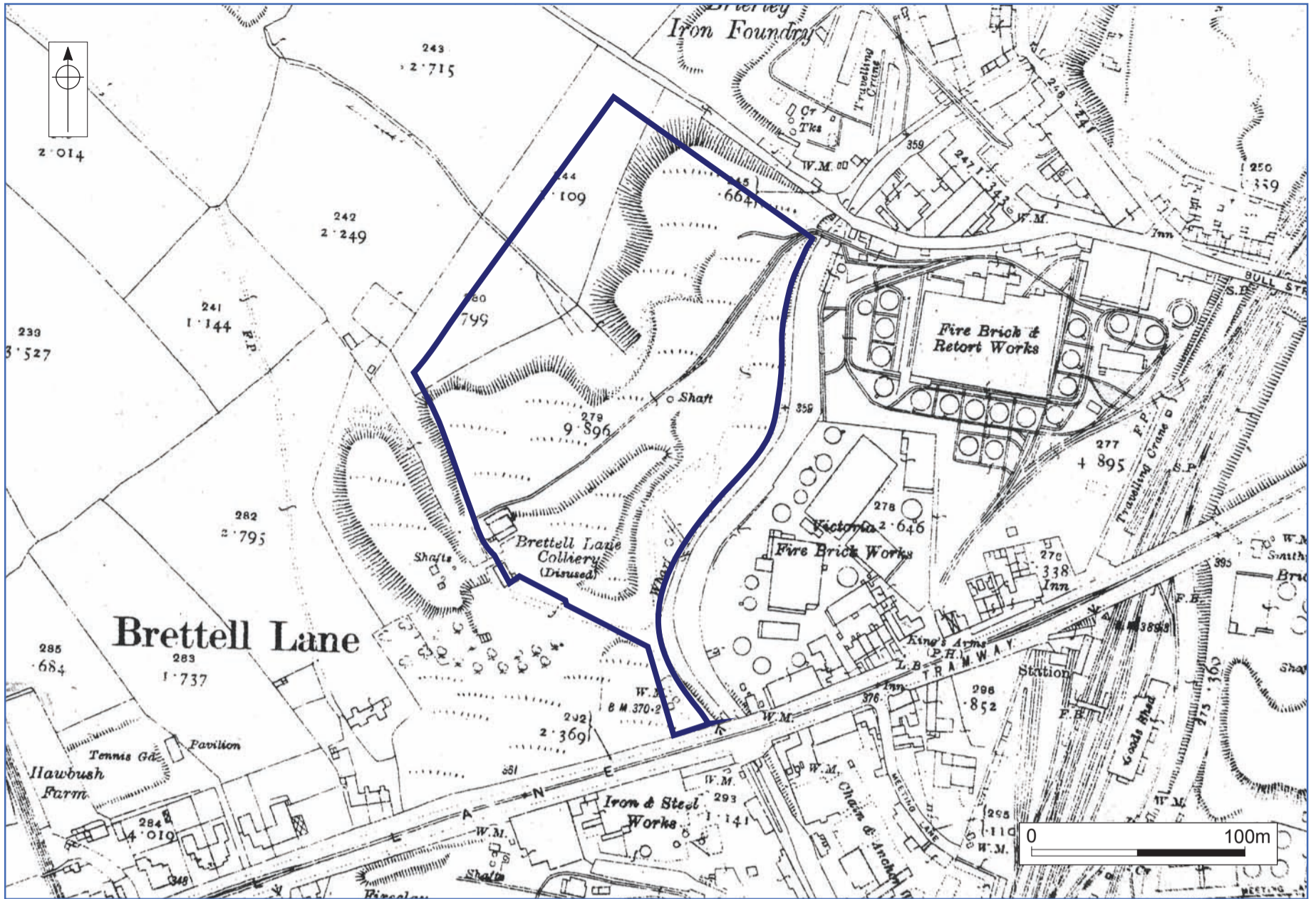


Figure 5: Extracts from OS 1919 (top) and OS 1938 (bottom)

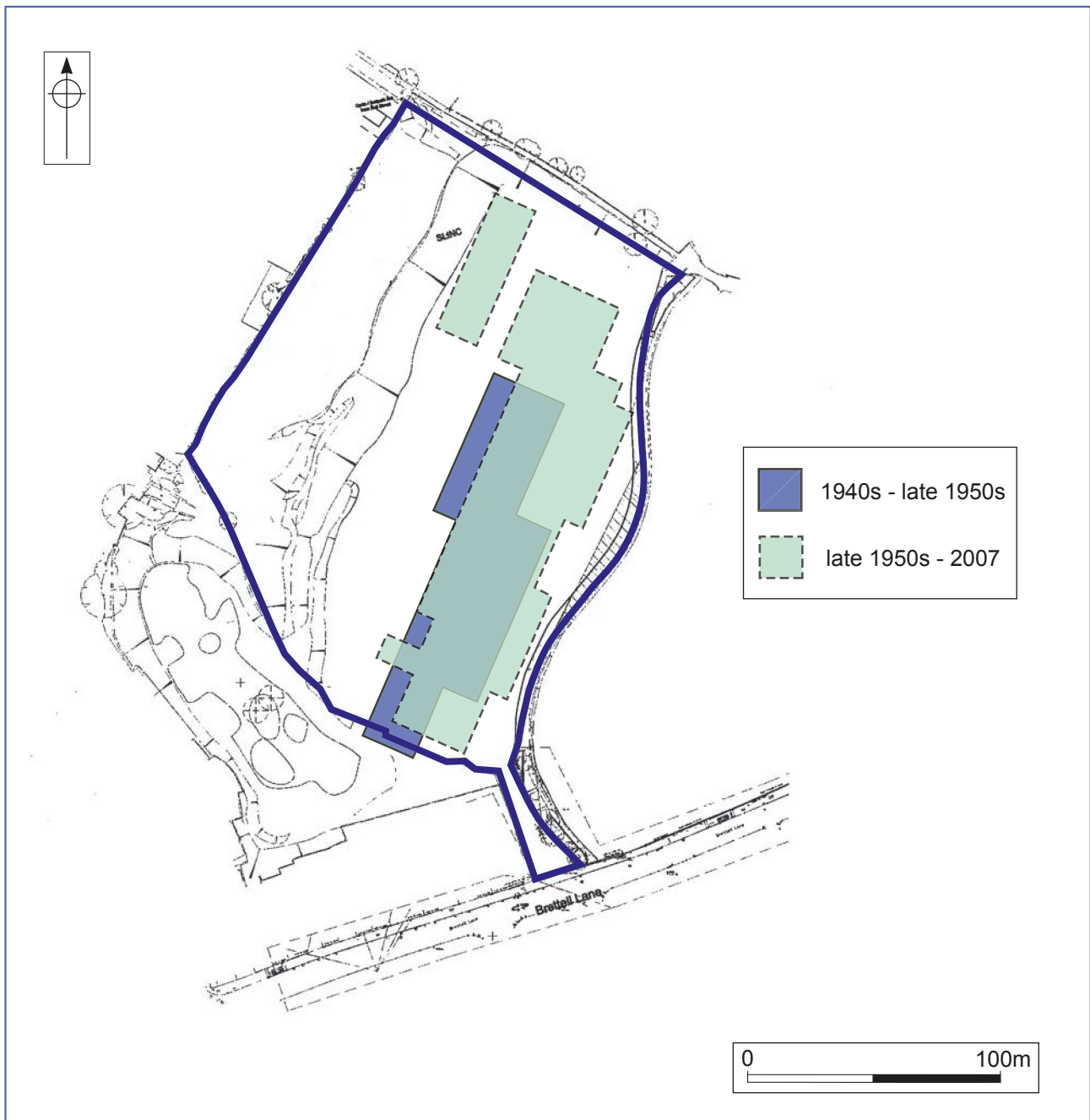


Figure 6: Footprints of factory buildings

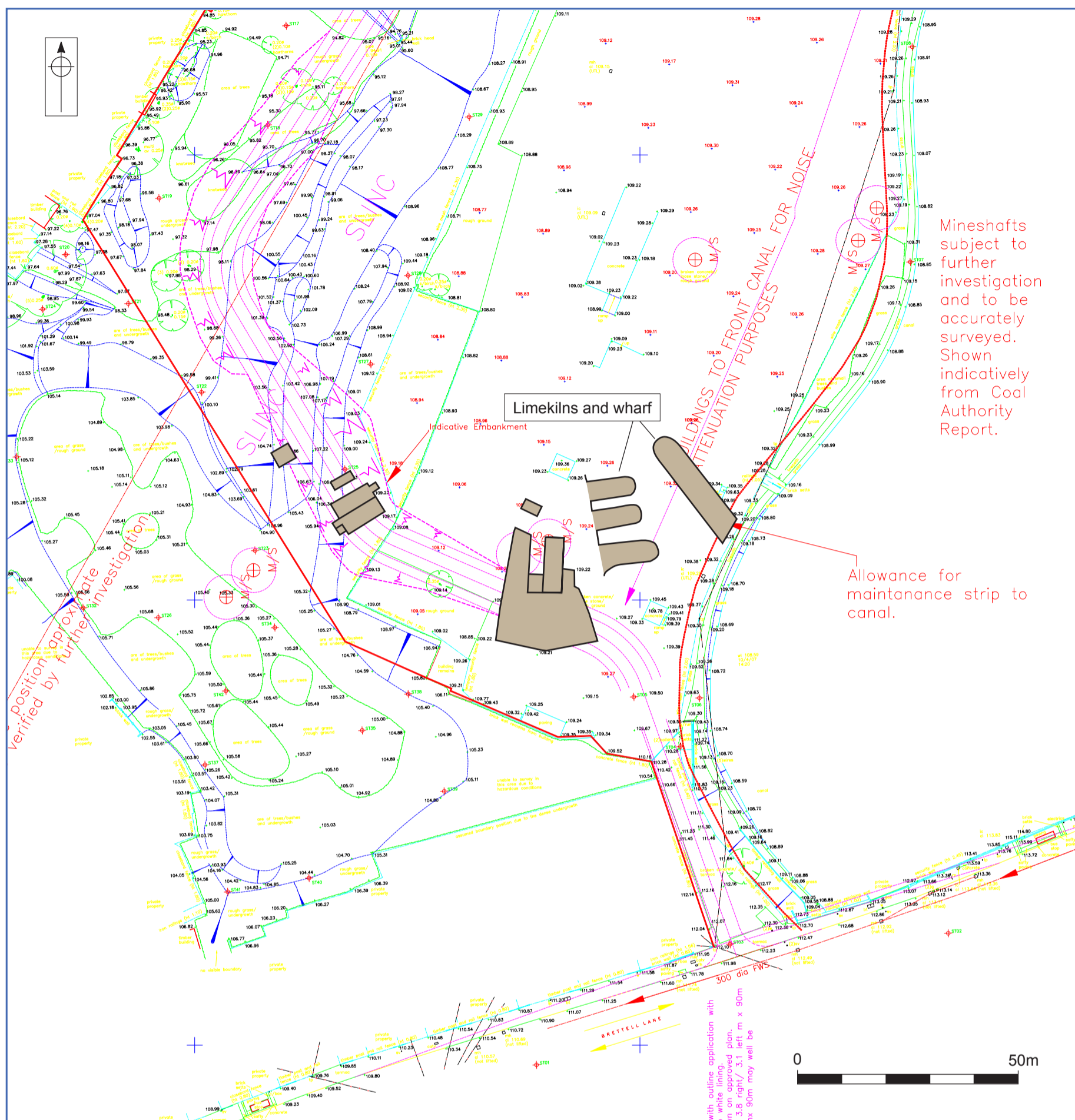


Figure 7: Location of limekilns and associated buildings shown on OS 1884

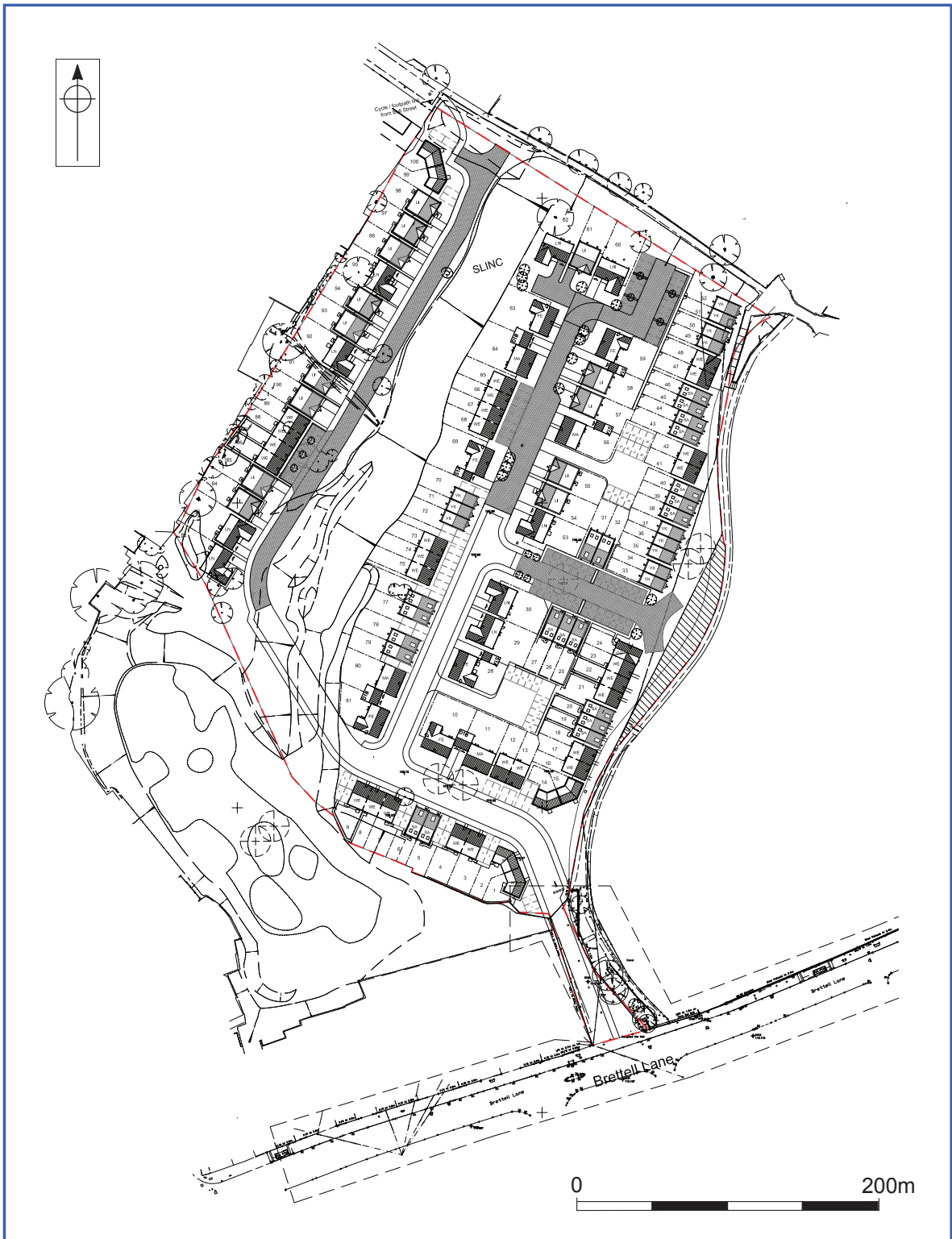


Figure 8: Plan of proposed development