ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION AT THE FORMER VIDEO SHOP AND BANK, OFF A38/LONGBRIDGE LANE, LONGBRIDGE, BIRMINGHAM

Andrew Mann and Derek Hurst

With a contribution by Alan Jacobs

Illustrations by Carolyn Hunt

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Worcestershire County Council

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

Project 2802
Report 1376
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Archaeological evaluation at the former video shop and bank, off A38/Longbridge Lane, Longbridge, Birmingham

Andrew Mann

With a contribution by Alan Jacobs

Part 1 Project summary

An archaeological evaluation was undertaken at Longbridge in Birmingham on the site of the former video shop and bank at the west end of Longbridge Lane (National Grid reference SP 0090 7755). This evaluation was undertaken on behalf of Halcrow Group Limited and St Modwen Developments Ltd (the client), who intend to build a mixed commercial and residential development on the site. The project aimed to determine if any significant archaeology was present and if so to indicate its location, date and nature. This report also incorporates, where appropriate, the results of the evaluation trenching carried out within the adjacent former MG Rover North Works and North Works car park car park in 2003.

The current archaeological evaluation identified the stone and brick walls and cobbled yards surfaces of a building known as Longbridge House, which was identified from cartographic evidence. Artefactual remains recovered suggest that this building dated from the 18th century. To the north of this building a broad area of organic alluvium was identified that has considerable potential to provide information on the past environment of the area. This confirmed the results from the adjacent evaluation trenching which also indicated the high potential for environmentally significant deposits in this part of Longbridge.

Part 2 Detailed report

1. Background

1.1 Reasons for the project

An archaeological evaluation was undertaken at the former video shop and bank at the A38/Longbridge Lane junction at the west end of Longbridge Lane, and adjacent to the former MG Rover North Works Car Park in south Birmingham (NGR SP 0090 7755; Fig 1), on behalf of Halcrow Group Limited and St Modwen Developments Ltd (the client). The client intends to build a commercial development on the site, which is considered by the Birmingham City Council Planning Archaeologist to potentially affect a site of archaeological interest.

1.2 Project parameters

The project conforms to the *Standard and guidance for archaeological field evaluation* (IFA 1999). Following a brief from Birmingham City Council a specification was prepared by Halcrow Group Limited (Halcrow 2005), and a project proposal (including detailed specification) by WHEAS (2005).

1.3 Aims

The aims of the evaluation were to locate archaeological deposits within the footprint of two demolished buildings (video shop and bank), and to determine, if present, their extent, state of preservation, date, type, vulnerability and documentation. The purpose of this was to establish their significance, since this would make it possible to recommend an appropriate treatment, which may then be integrated with the proposed development programme.

More specifically the following aims were identified.

- To clarify the presence/absence of Longbridge House and/or any other remains relating to previous land use at the site preceding the factory development;
- To identify, within the constraints of the investigation, the date, character, condition and depth of any surviving remains within the site;
- To assess the degree of existing and proposed impacts on the sub-surface horizons in order to appraise the extent of archaeological survival.

2. Methods

2.1 Documentary search

2.2 Documentary search

A desk-based assessment carried out for the Environmental Statement collated the relevant sources derived from the SMR, early Ordnance Survey maps and any information supplied by the client (Halcrow 2003). Any additional relevant background information has been previously compiled for the two preceding stages of evaluation and excavation (Patrick *et al* 2003, Griffin *et al* 2004) which cover extensive land on both the north and south sides of Longbridge Lane. These reports were consulted in detail prior to the fieldwork taking place.

2.3 Fieldwork methodology

2.3.1 Fieldwork strategy

A detailed specification has been prepared by the Service (WHEAS 2005). Fieldwork was undertaken between the 4th and 7th of October 2005. The site reference number and site code is BSMR 20737. The trenches of this evaluation stage were numbered 9 and 10 in continuation of the numbering of trenches across the rest to the St Modwen development area.

Two trenches, amounting to just over 183m² in area, were excavated within the footprint of the demolished buildings (Fig 2). Deposits not considered significant were removed using a 360º tracked/wheeled excavator under archaeological supervision, initially using a toothed bucket to remove demolition rubble and concrete slabs relating to the present buildings. Subsequent to demolition a toothless ditching bucket was employed. After identifying archaeological deposits subsequent excavation was undertaken by hand. Clean surfaces were inspected, and selected deposits were excavated to retrieve artefactual material and environmental samples, in order to determine their nature. Deposits were recorded according to standard Service practice (CAS 1995).

Trench 9 was located within the footprint of the demolished video shop, the trench was widened during the evaluation to the limits of the foundations to establish the extent of initial archaeological observations. Trench 10 was excavated on the western edge of the foundations of the bank, since the demolition of this building revealed extensive damage to the subsurface deposits within its footprint, resulting from the construction of its vaults and safes. The depth of the deposits within this area resulted in the need to step-in the trench so as to conform to health and safety regulations.

2.3.2 Structural analysis

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

2.4 Artefact methodology

2.4.1 Artefact recovery policy

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

2.4.2 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. The date was used for determining the broad date of phases defined for the site. All information was recorded on *pro forma* sheets.

Pottery fabrics are referenced to the fabric reference series maintained by the Service (Hurst and Rees 1992).

2.5 Environmental archaeology methodology

2.5.1 Sampling policy

The environmental sampling strategy conformed to standard Service practice (CAS 1995; appendix 4). Samples of 10 litres were taken from two contexts in Trench 10 (232 and 228),

which were both of unknown date. A monolith was also taken across these deposits for pollen or geoarchaeological analysis.

2.5.2 Method of analysis

Full assessment of samples from this evaluation will be undertaken as part of a wider assessment of environmentally significant deposits on this side of Longbridge Lane encompassing also samples from the 2003 evaluation. Accordingly the Recommendations below are provided with a view to facilitating this process.

The new samples from the evaluation reported here will be stored at the WHEAS office until further notice as they may be required for future study.

2.6 The methods in retrospect

The methods adopted allow a high degree of confidence that the aims of the project have been achieved. Adequate access to the archaeological remains and sufficient time allowed the site to be investigated and interpreted to a high standard.

3. Topographical and archaeological context

3.1 Location

The site is located at the junction of the A38 Bristol Road and Longbridge Lane on the site of a former video shop and bank. The general lie of the land is that the ground slopes downhill from the A38 eastwards, though it is possible that this area, especially into the car park, has been subjected to large-scale landscaping.

3.2 Geology

The site lies on a succession of solid geological types (from west to east) as follows; Lickey Quartzite, sandstone, red marls/mudstones, sandstones and mudstones. There is alluvium beside the River Rea, which formerly flowed from west to east across the North Works site. The river is now in a concealed culvert on the North Works factory site to the south of Longbridge Lane.

3.3 Historical and archaeological background

A full account of the historical and archaeological background is in the desk-based assessment carried out for the Environmental Statement (Halcrow 2003). The Birmingham Sites and Monuments Record did not register any previous archaeological interest on the site of the current evaluation, though, in general, the area of the site is believed to have potential for 'burnt mounds'. Surveys of the banks of the River Rea and its tributaries elsewhere in Birmingham have identified many such burnt mounds and one estimate for the number of burnt mounds suggests that there are as many as five for every mile of stream (Barfield and Hodder 1989). This type of site is commonly found close to streams and is thought to represent a cooking place or the location of bathing (sauna) activity. Significantly these sites date to the Bronze Age, a period for which there is relatively little known in the region.

The Roman road between the forts at Droitwich and Metchley follows the present line of the A38 Bristol Road, which forms the western boundary of the site. The Roman road would have crossed the River Rea, either via a bridge or ford somewhere in the area, and could have formed the focus for a Roman settlement.

Little is known about the early history of this part of south Birmingham. Evaluation of the adjacent areas to the east and south have so far indicated a rural character up to the post-

medieval period. **Longbridge Farm** is shown adjacent to the Bristol Road to the south of Longbridge Lane for the first time on the 1840 tithe map. Evaluation (Griffin *et al* 2004) has now shown this to be of 18th century origin. Directly opposite and to the north of Longbridge Farm the site of **Longbridge House** is also first indicated in 1840 from the map evidence.

Later the Halesowen railway was built in 1881 and the first factory was established in 1892 on the southern side of the line. The area to the north of the railway continued to remain as fields until the North Works was built in 1916, at which time the industrialisation of the area was so extensive that the River Rea was diverted into an underground culvert.

4. Results

Where appropriate the results of the earlier evaluation trenching in the area just immediately to the east (Patrick *et al* 2003) are also incorporated below. The trenches of the current evaluation were numbered 9-10 in continuation of the numbering of trenches across the rest to the St Modwen development area.

4.1 Structural analysis

The trenches and features recorded are shown in Figs 3 and 4. The results of the structural analysis are presented in Appendix 1. Context numbers below relate to Trenches 9-10, unless otherwise indicated, with numbers 100-151 relating to Trench 9, and numbers 200-236 to Trench 10.

4.1.1 Phase 1 Natural deposits

Natural deposits (contexts 107 and 229) were identified in both trenches, at a depth of between 0.60-1.60m below the present ground surface. These consisted of blue/green sandy clays.

4.1.2 Phase 2 Natural deposits (undated alluvial deposits)

Undated alluvial deposits and organic clays were located across the entire length of Trench 10 and were approximately 0.50m deep. Cut through these was a channel around 1.5m wide and up to 0.75m deep (Plate 1). It is possible that this was excavated to drain a broad marshy area. The very organic silty clay (232) and the stone bank (231) on the northern edge of the channel are also presumably the up-cast from the creation of a channel.

This broad organic alluvial sequence was also discovered during earlier evaluation trenching (Patrick *et al* 2003) in the area immediately to the east and south of the present site. Here undated alluvial deposits were located in Trenches 1a, 2, 4 and 5 (Patrick *et al* 2003). The alluvial deposits in Trenches 1a and 2 were approximately 0.5m deep and also represented the location of a broad, marshy area prone to flooding while the deeper alluvial deposits in Trenches 4 and 5 seem to be located within the very base of the river valley (on the other side of Longbridge Lane from the evaluation reported here).

4.1.3 Phase 3 Post-medieval deposits (18th-19th century)

Structural remains were identified in Trench 9 (Fig 3) consisting of four brick walls and one sandstone wall, and an area of cobbled surface (Plate 2). These are believed to be the remains of Longbridge House, as shown on the first edition OS map (OS 1884) and the tithe map of 1840.

The earliest deposit appears to be a layer of dark brown silty clay that overlies the natural clays in much of Trench 1 and probably represents a buried topsoil. This layer was cut by the construction trenches of four walls (103, 105, 140 and 141). The earliest of these was the sandstone wall (105) that was aligned east to west (Plate 3). This wall was made of large

sandstone blocks that had been worked to create a visible edge on the northern side. This wall appears to have been cut by all three other walls that are aligned north to south. Walls 140 and 141 appeared to extend southwards and were visible within the southern bulk of the trench, although these sections had been removed either during the construction or demolition of the video shop.

To the east of the walls was a cobbled surface or yard defined by the walls 141 and 145, that appear to abut one another to the north of the cobbled surface (Plate 4). The cobbled yard surface lay directly upon the natural (107). Further to the east of the yard surface cut into the natural were numerous pits and postholes that presumably acted as some form of yard management or boundary fence to the side of the building. Of particular interest was pit 129 that was square in plan and had at least nine stakes of various diameters around its edge, but its function was established. A ditch to the north-east of the trench presumably acted as a drainage/boundary ditch to the east of the building.

4.1.4 Phase 4 Modern deposits (20th century)

Modern deposits dominated the site specifically around Trench 10 where frequent thick levelling layers have been deposited up to 1.75m thick, compared to a maximum of 0.70m across Trench 9. All layers above 232 and 228 (Fig 4) have been interpreted as levelling dumps. Overlying much of the archaeology in Trench 9 there were also numerous demolition (108) and levelling layers (109, 110, 111, 147, 149). The latest wall discovered in Trench 9 (103), represents the final remains of the video shop demolished prior to excavation. The outline of this wall could still be seen in a concrete foundation (112; Fig 3).

4.2 Environmental results by Liz Pearson

This evaluation produced more evidence of organic deposits to the north of Longbridge Lane, just north of Longbridge House, which consist of a palaeochannel associated with organic fills (Trench 10, contexts 231 and 232). No analysis has yet been conducted on these new samples, although an assessment of macrofossil remains was undertaken on similar samples taken during the course of the 2003 evaluation (contexts 2006, 2011 and 2012).

The following description of these similar deposits is based on the previous phase of evaluation on this side of Longbridge Lane (Patrick *et al* 2003):

> There was evidence of several palaeochannels and alluvial layers up to about 0.5m thick. For instance, in Trench 2 (Fig 3) a narrow east-west aligned channel (Trench 2, 2011) was filled with a dark greyish brown silty loam, cut into natural sandy deposits. A later extensive deposit of lighter greyish brown sandy loam (Trench 2, 2006) appeared to be slightly organic and may have formed in an area of marshland. However, the presence of large rounded pebbles scattered throughout much of this deposit, and its sandy nature suggest some disturbance resulting from high-energy water flow (perhaps flooding). A later east-west aligned channel (Trench 2, 2012) flowed to the south of 2006.
>
> The organic content of the processed sub-samples from Trench 2 contexts 2006 and 2011 was, however, low, the presence of fragmented charcoal and possibly coal contributing to the dark appearance of the deposits. Highly humified and unidentifiable woody material or bark was the only organic matter recovered.

The dating of these deposits is considered to be important as they demonstrate a sequence of change in the fluvial environment of the site, which may have affected settlement or use of the area. There is a change from water flow in river channels, to the development of a broad area of marshland, and subsequently a return to water flow in channels. Although survival of macrofossil remains was poor and humified, it was thought that there would be sufficient organic content in these deposits to date the sequence using radiocarbon (C14) dating. Pollen analysis was not recommended in the 2003 evaluation report on account of the sandy nature of the deposits and condition of the organic remains. However, since this evaluation, good

pollen survival (despite poor preservation of macrofossil remains) has been demonstrated on the Bourn Brook at Selly Oak in Birmingham (Goad *et al* 2004). Pollen may also survive in these deposits and provide useful information on the changing environment.

To the south of Longbridge Lane better developed alluvial deposits were located during the 2003 evaluation, and the Stage 2 evaluation (Griffin *et al* 2004), as they were relatively more organic (and more clayey) than those in Trench 2/Trench 10, as well as thicker. Here well-preserved remains of beetles and possibly mites survived (Patrick *et al* 2003), and for instance in the lowermost layer of Trench 4 (4013) seeds of rush (*Juncus* spp) and small wood fragments were moderately abundant. However, subsequent attempts to date these deposits to the south of Longbridge Lane, as a first stage in their further analysis, were largely defeated by their highly polluted nature (hydrocarbons in particular – probably from diesel fuel and oil), though one date appeared to work suggesting that these deposits were indeed of medieval date (1210-1310 cal AD; Griffin *et al* 2004).

4.3 Artefact analysis, by Alan Jacobs

4.3.1 Artefactual analysis

The pottery assemblage retrieved from the excavated area consisted of 69 sherds of pottery weighing 1535g, and in addition fragments of tile, brick, tobacco pipe, land drain, glass, bone and an iron nail were recovered. The group came from 14 stratified contexts and could be dated from the post-medieval period onwards (see Table 1). Level of preservation was generally fair with the majority of sherds displaying only moderate levels of abrasion.

Material	Total	Weight (g)
Modern pottery	27	384
Post-medieval pottery	42	1151
Tile	5	182
Brick	8	24170
Land drain	17	4121
Tobacco pipe	4	21
Bone	1	16
Cement	1	9
Glass	3	184
Iron nail	1	53
Total	109	30291

Table 1: Quantification of the assemblage

4.3.2 Discussion of the pottery

All sherds have been grouped and quantified according to fabric type (see Tables 2, 3 and 4). Four diagnostic form sherds were present, and the other sherds were datable by fabric type to their general period or production span. The discussion below is a summary of the finds and associated location or contexts by period. Where possible, *terminus post quem* dates have been allocated and the importance of individual finds commented upon as necessary.

Fabric		Total	Weight
78	Post-medieval red sandy ware	28	1049
81.3	Nottingham stoneware	2	22
81.4	Modern miscellaneous stoneware	2	258
83	Porcelain	2	3
84	Cream ware	12	80
85	Modern stone china	23	123

Table 2: Quantification of the post-medieval and modern pottery

Post-medieval Red Sandy ware (fabric 78) comprises the largest single element of the assemblage and ranges in date from the 17th to the 18th century. Forms represented comprise pancheons and a small cup (context 106) the fabric with white laminated inclusions strongly indicating an 18th century date for these forms. A number of creamware forms (fabric 84) and a rim sherd of a Nottingham Stoneware (fabric 81.3) tankard (context 106) and a very small body sherd (context 228) were the only other post-medieval sherds recovered.

The modern pottery consisted of just three fabrics, and was dominated by modern stone china (fabric 85). Forms in this fabric were predominantly plates and cups (contexts 106, 108, 209 and unstratified), which appear to be mainly 19th century with only a few sherds of willow-pattern ware, possibly intrusive in the case of context 106. Two very small fragments of porcelain (fabric 83) were recovered (context 108), small fragments of a cup and possibly saucer. The two fragments of miscellaneous modern stoneware (fabric 81.4) consisted of the rim and base of a large pancheon (context 108), most probably of 19th century date.

4.3.3 Ceramic building material

A number of fragments of medieval/post-medieval tile (fabric 2a & 2c; cf Hurst 1992), fabric type 2a dating to the 13th-18th century and type 2c from the 15th-18th century (context 106). A number of fragments of horseshoe-shaped land drains were recovered, the fabric being closest to 2b in the type series but clearly of early 19th century date. This form of land drain was used from about 1820 to the 1840s when technological improvements replaced this type with round pipes. The horseshoe land drain was produced through an extrusion machine and then shaped over a horse. This has left clear stress marks within the fabric, and a distinctive form (Vanda Bartoszuk pers comm.). The material recovered (contexts 108, 142, 228, 230 and 233) was not complete enough to check for stamp marks, which could have dated this form more closely. A number of bricks were recovered as samples and were classified by size (Peters 1969) as dating from the post-medieval period onwards. Two examples dated from 1740-1800 (context 140; fabric 2b) and 6 (fabric 2b) dating from 1760-1850 (contexts 141, 145 and 153), all having traces of lime mortar on them.

4.3.4 Other finds

The single fragment of bone was recovered (108), and a number of undiagnostic tobacco pipe stems of 17th-19th century date (contexts 106 and 108). Finally there was a single square sectioned (handmade) iron nail (context 108), and two fragments of post-medieval glass fragments of the neck and base of a wine or beer bottle (contexts 108 and 216).

4.3.5 Discussion of artefactual evidence

In conclusion no archaeological artefacts clearly dateable earlier than the 18th century were recovered. The post-medieval and modern finds also indicate distinct activity, in particular the draining of farmland in the first half of the 19th century indicated by the dateable horseshoe drains. This gives a very clear picture of 18th century occupation continuing into

the 19th-20th century, which closely mirrors the evidence from Longbridge Farm discovered during earlier evaluation and excavation (Griffin *et al* 2004) on an adjacent site.

Context	Material	Type	Total	Weight
0	Cement	Modern	1	9
0	Land drain	Modern	1	398
0	Pottery	Modern	2	18
0	Tobacco pipe	Pmd	1	2
102	Tile	Med/pmd	1	59
106	Tile	Med/pmd	2	67
106	Pottery	Modern	1	7
106	Pottery	Pmd	15	780
106	Tobacco pipe	Pmd	2	18
108	Mammal bone	Modern	1	16
108	Glass bottle	Pmd/mod	2	91
108	Land drain	Modern	5	579
108	Iron nail	Pmd/mod	1	53
108	Pottery	Modern	23	355
108	Pottery	Pmd	26	370
108	Tobacco pipe	Pmd	1	1
140	Brick	Pmd/mod	2	6420
141	Brick	Pmd/mod	2	6780
142	Land drain	Modern	3	202
145	Brick	Pmd/mod	2	6700
153	Brick	Pmd/mod	2	4270
209	Pottery	Modern	1	4
216	Glass bottle	Pmd/mod	1	93
228	Land drain	Modern	3	627
228	Pottery	Pmd	1	1
230	Land drain	Modern	1	659
232	Tile	Med/pmd	2	56
233	Land drain	Modern	4	1656

Table 3: Context finds

5. General site discussion

Where appropriate extensive reference is made to the results of a previous stage of evaluation (Patrick *et al* 2003) which took place just to the east of the site reported here.

5.1 Undated alluvial deposits (?medieval)

The organic clays and alluvial deposits in Trench 10 were broadly identical to deposits observed by Patrick *et al* (2003) on the north side of Longbridge Lane. During the 2003 evaluation, the macrofossil evidence from selected bulk samples was also assessed for the development site on both sides of Longbridge Lane. In the light of this it was suggested that alluvial deposits in the area of Trench 4 (on the south side of Longbridge Lane) were most likely to produce more than one category of results, which would be valuable for interpreting changing environmental conditions. These deposits accordingly contained identifiable

macrofossil remains (mostly insect fragments, with some identifiable seed remains) and it was also likely that pollen will be relatively well preserved, and could contribute towards the results.

In the light of the initial results from the first evaluation to the north of Longbridge Lane (Patrick *et al* 2003) a further stage of sampling was then carried out in the vicinity of Trench 4 (based on borehole sampling; Griffin *et al* 2004) to the south of Longbridge Lane. In the case of Trench 4 further investigation by a geoarchaeologist (Payne in Griffin *et al* 2004) concluded as follows:

> The sequence of deposits observed in the cores, therefore, appeared to be Devensian banded sands overlain by late Devensian sands and gravels above which a Holocene soil has developed. The buried soil is thin and truncated and contains no archaeological strata. Fragments of charcoal that were observed within it are most likely to have been reworked and redeposited from further upstream. Due to the truncation of the buried soil and the amount of *in situ* reworking and pedogenesis that may have occurred any palaeoenvironmental information that it may contain will be limited and what evidence survives should be treated with caution. On balance, therefore, it would be potentially more productive to focus further analysis on the environmental deposits to the north of Longbridge Lane.

This in itself suggests that there may a need to exercise caution in the interpretation of the alluvial sequence to the south of Longbridge Lane due to the apparent natural reworking of the deposits. Subsequently difficulties have also been encountered with these samples in the acquisition of satisfactory C14 dates for these deposits because of the high level of ground pollution in this part of the development site in the immediate vicinity of the factory buildings (Griffin *et al* 2004, 8).

5.2 Post-medieval and modern (18th-19th century)

Archaeology within Trench 9 confirmed the survival of buried remains of Longbridge House visible on the first edition OS map of 1884. Preservation was good despite significant archaeology only being 0.40m below the present ground surface. Damage caused to the underlying archaeology by the building, which later housed the video shop was limited, although more damage was caused during its demolition and foundation removal. Various phases of sandstone and brick walls were uncovered with external yard surfaces and structures. All walls, excluding the modern demolished building, dated to between 1740 and 1850. Although not dated, the postholes, pits and ditch to the east of the walls are assumed to be in some way associated with the building, and therefore contemporary.

During the 19th century (between 1820-1840) to the north of Longbridge House there was evidence of deliberate drainage of a broad marshy area prone to flooding, by constructing a ditch within which a land drain was later inserted. Fragments of land drain within other areas of the organic clays suggest more than one drain may have been inserted, although no trench cuts were visible.

The level of survival of Longbridge House, therefore, was similar to that found for Longbridge Farm (Trench 3a, Patrick *et al* 2003; Trench 8, Griffin *et al* 2004). Here remains of the farm buildings survived from the late 18th century onwards (Hurst 2004).

5.3 Modern (20th century)

Modern deposits were dominated by the frequent and often thick layers of levelling material and industrial waste dumped on the site. These related to the landscaping of the site after the destruction of the rural buildings adjacent to Bristol Road and during the construction of the North Works factory in 1916. The thicker deposits located across Trench 10 may indicate that the attempts to drain the marshy area implemented around 1820-40 had failed so that a

greater depth of material was required to consolidate the wet and boggy ground, as well as lifting the road above the wet surrounding landscape.

6. Recommendations

Environmental deposits

In the light of the results of the evaluation reported here, and of previous evaluation (2003), an extensive area of alluviation has now been demonstrated on both sides of Longbridge Lane. Such deposits are particularly important, as little palaeoenvironmental work has been carried out in this part of the Midlands, and hence little is known about settlement development and land-use, and other activities such as woodland clearance in earlier periods. If these deposits are to be affected by development then the following recommendations are suggested.

The focus of environmental analysis may indeed need to switch to deposits on the north side of Longbridge Lane in the light of the highly polluted condition of the remains to the south of Longbridge Lane as demonstrated in Griffin *et al* (2004), where, though the environmental deposits are better developed, they are possibly compromised by natural reworking (see above Section 5), and have been proven by a previous attempt at radiocarbon dating to be problematic in terms of datability. It is recommended, therefore, that the potentially significant environmental deposits on the north side of Longbridge Lane should, in preference, be subject to further analysis, based on the samples already taken both in this stage of evaluation and also during the Stage 1 evaluation by Patrick *et al* (2003).

The following staged recommendations are made, therefore, for further environmental analysis based on the results of the fieldwork so far in relation to this large-scale development:

- A further batch of radiocarbon dates should be undertaken, this time based on samples from the north side of Longbridge Lane with the intention of establishing a dated environmental sequence (pollen etc). In view of the general pollution of the area it would still be sensible to discuss the requirement for additional pre-treatment of samples with the relevant dating laboratory. Therefore, any further AMS dating should only be undertaken after the possibility of specific pre-treatment has been designed (if necessary) in consultation with the radiocarbon laboratory as far as possible to remove all contaminants. It may be advisable in the circumstances to carry out a trial date(s) so as to establish whether any organic contaminants are present on this side of Longbridge Lane, and, if so, whether they can be fully removed before dating. This should be done before any further environmental analysis (pollen etc) is undertaken.

- If further radiocarbon dating is successful, then it is recommended to complete an assessment of all the environmental samples from the north side of Longbridge Lane with a view to the analysis (pollen etc) and radiocarbon dating of monolith sampling of alluvium in order to determine any fluctuations in vegetation patterns and to identify human modification of the landscape. This includes samples from both the Stage 1 evaluation in North Car Park area, and the current evaluation reported here. **This analysis should be undertaken within a timescale that ensures the samples are still in a suitable state** – in the case of the monoliths, for instance, this means within a period of 6 months from their removal from site (ie by April 2006).

- Additional analysis should be integrated with the results (so far) of the pollen sampling strategy across all four cores from the North Factory site (south of Longbridge Lane), though these cores are currently associated with problematic dating;

In the event that the radiocarbon dating can be proven to work successfully, then one objective of any future fieldwork stage, during a watching brief for instance, may be:

- The collection of more environmental cores/samples from the development site, if site conditions and site works permit, with a view to undertaking further environmental analysis (if assessment indicates that these are worth investigation), but only if the problems with radiocarbon dating can be overcome. This may have implications for the assessment of samples etc from the evaluation stages already carried out, as potentially it would be sensible to assess all possible samples together, though there is also an issue of how long the current samples and monoliths can be effectively curated so that they remain viable (see above).

Structural remains

In relation to the structural remains of the site of Longbridge House no further archaeological work is specifically recommended, other than the recording of remains that may be encountered during a general watching brief on subsequent ground disturbance during the future development of the site.

The recommendations above are those of the Service and may vary from those of any archaeological curator or advisor to the planning authority.

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, 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 the west end of Longbridge Lane, Birmingham (NGR SP 0090 7755), on behalf of Halcrow Group Ltd and St Modwen Developments Ltd. Evaluation trenching within the footprints of two demolished buildings detected the remains of Longbridge House and also deposits of environmental potential.

Stone and brick walls and cobbled yard surfaces were recorded. Artefactual evidence suggest that this building dated originally to the 18th century, and was, therefore, constructed at much the same time as Longbridge Farm located on the opposite side of the lane.

8. The archive

The archive consists of:

18 Context records AS1

3 Fieldwork progress records AS2

2 Photographic records AS3

1 Sample records AS17

18 Abbreviated context records AS40

5 Scale drawings

1 Box of finds

The project archive is intended to be placed at Birmingham City Museum.

9. Acknowledgements

The Service would like to thank the following for their kind assistance in the successful conclusion of this project: Simon Griffin of Halcrow Group Limited and Mike Hodder of Birmingham City Council.

10. Personnel

The fieldwork and report preparation was led by Andrew Mann. The project manager responsible for the quality of the project was Derek Hurst. Fieldwork was undertaken by Andrew Mann and Christine Elgy, finds analysis by Alan Jacobs, and illustration by Carolyn Hunt.

11. Bibliography

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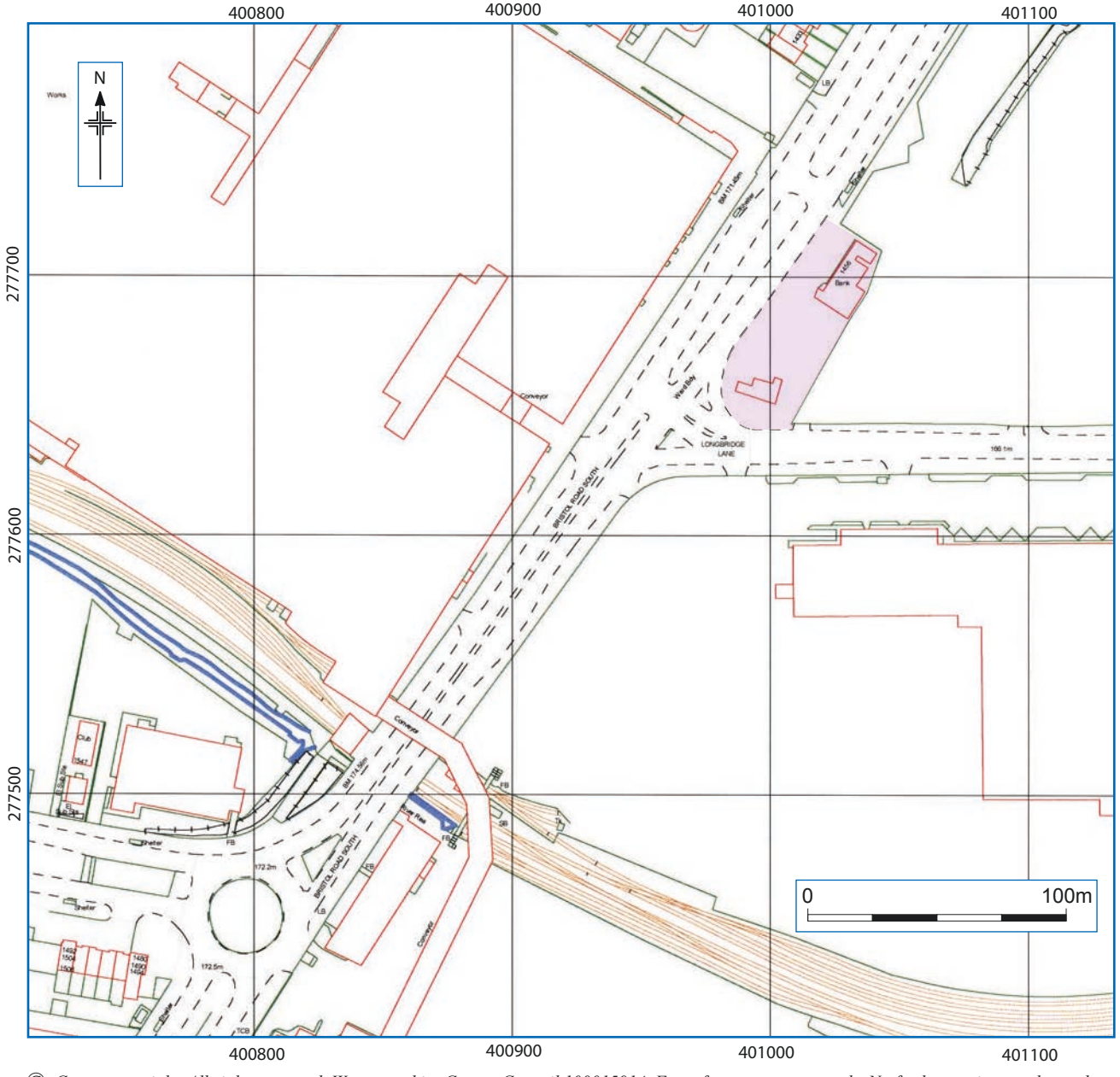
12. Abbreviation

BSMR Birmingham Sites and Monuments Record.

Figures



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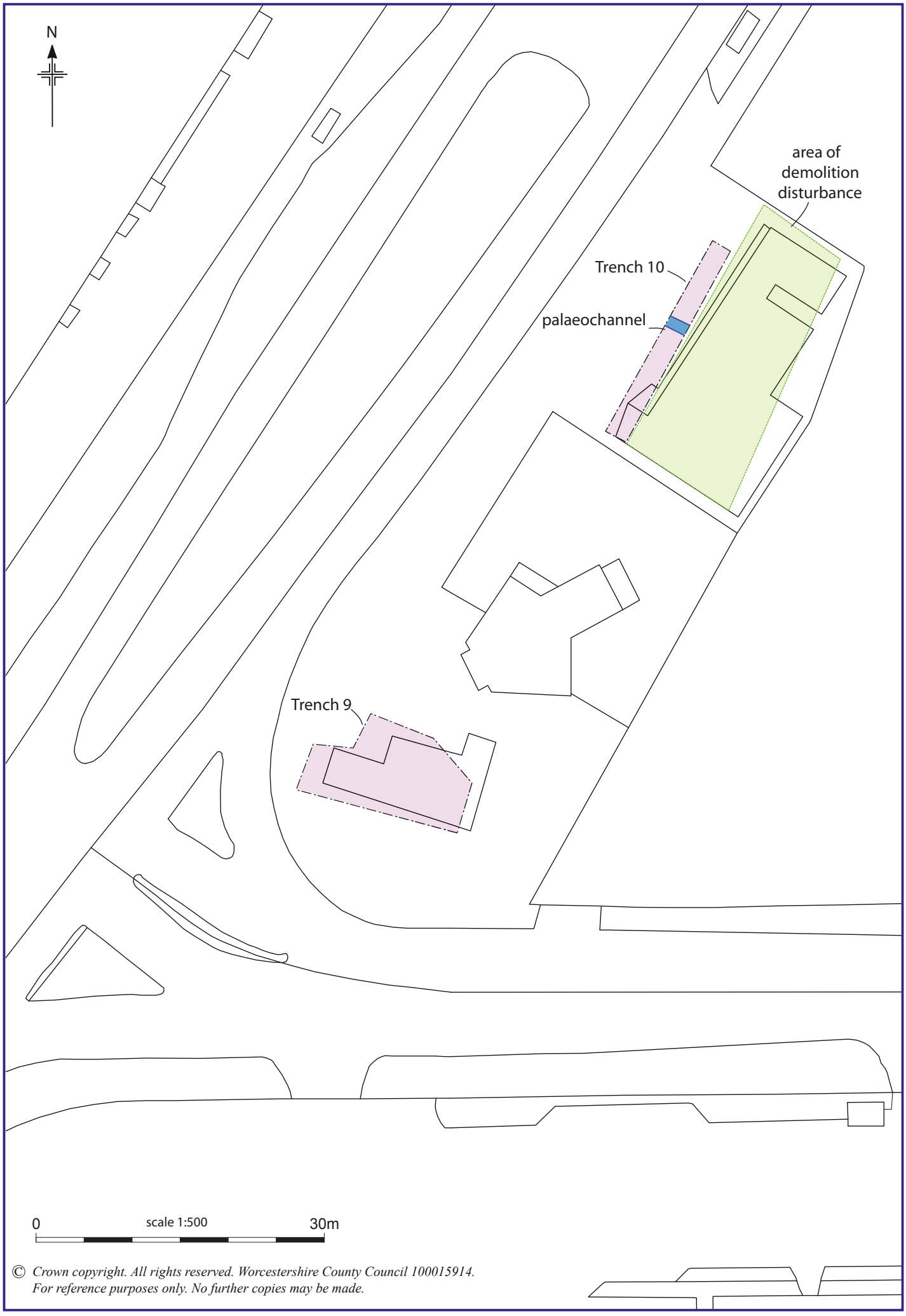
Location of Longbridge House.

Figure 1



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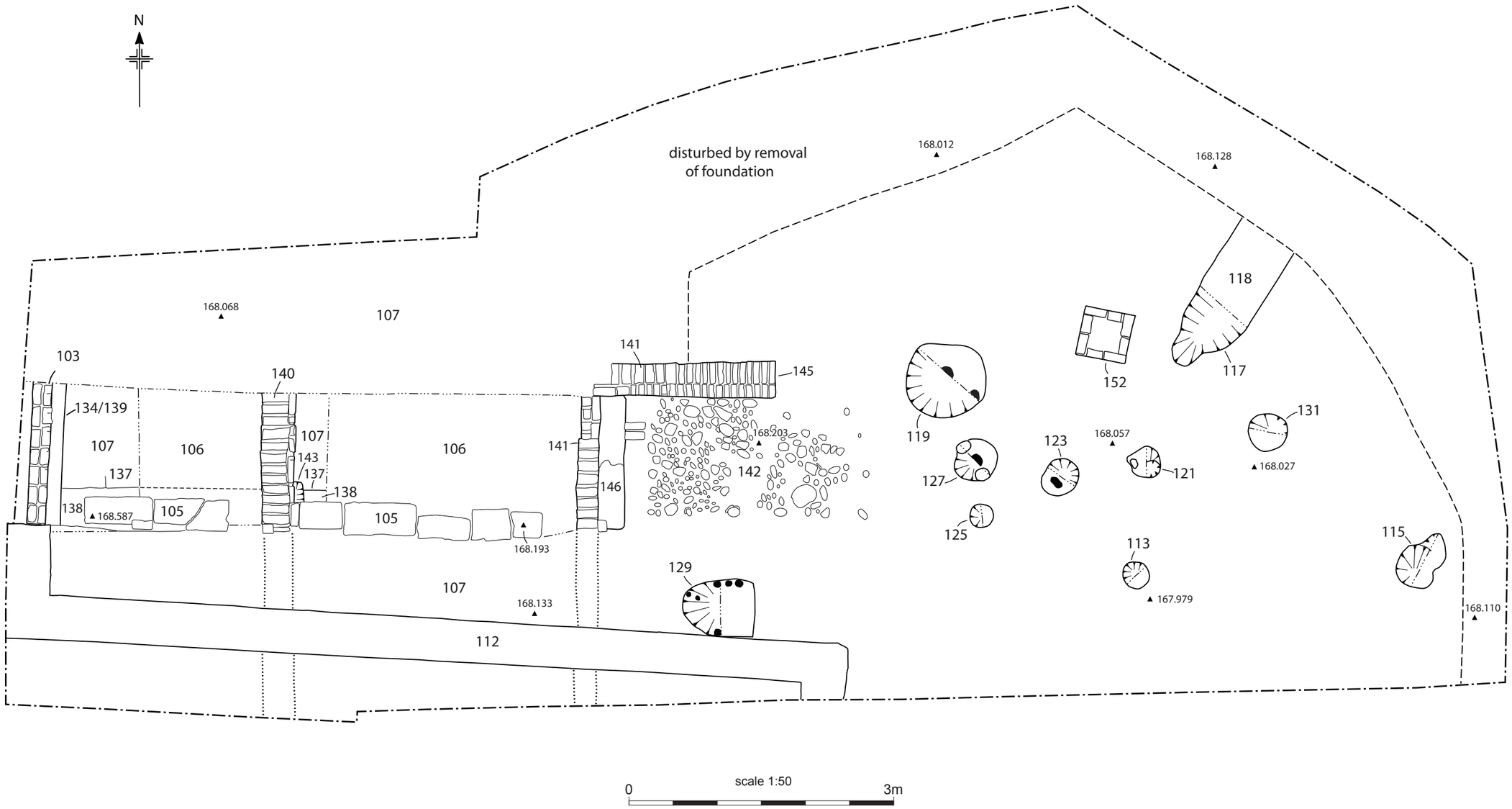
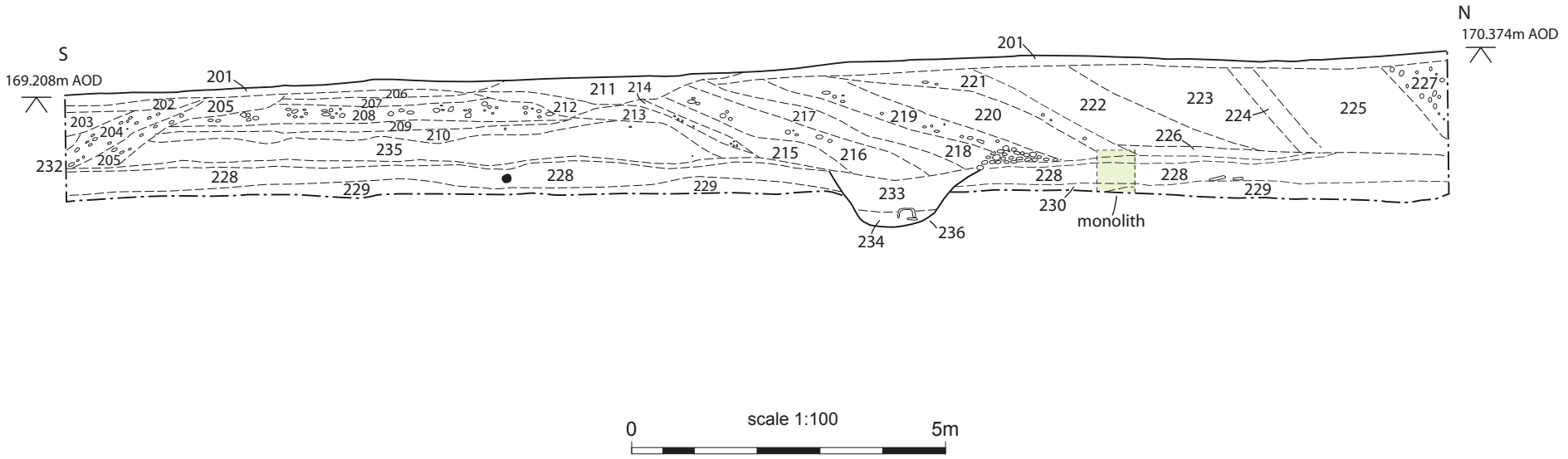
Trench location plan *Figure 2*



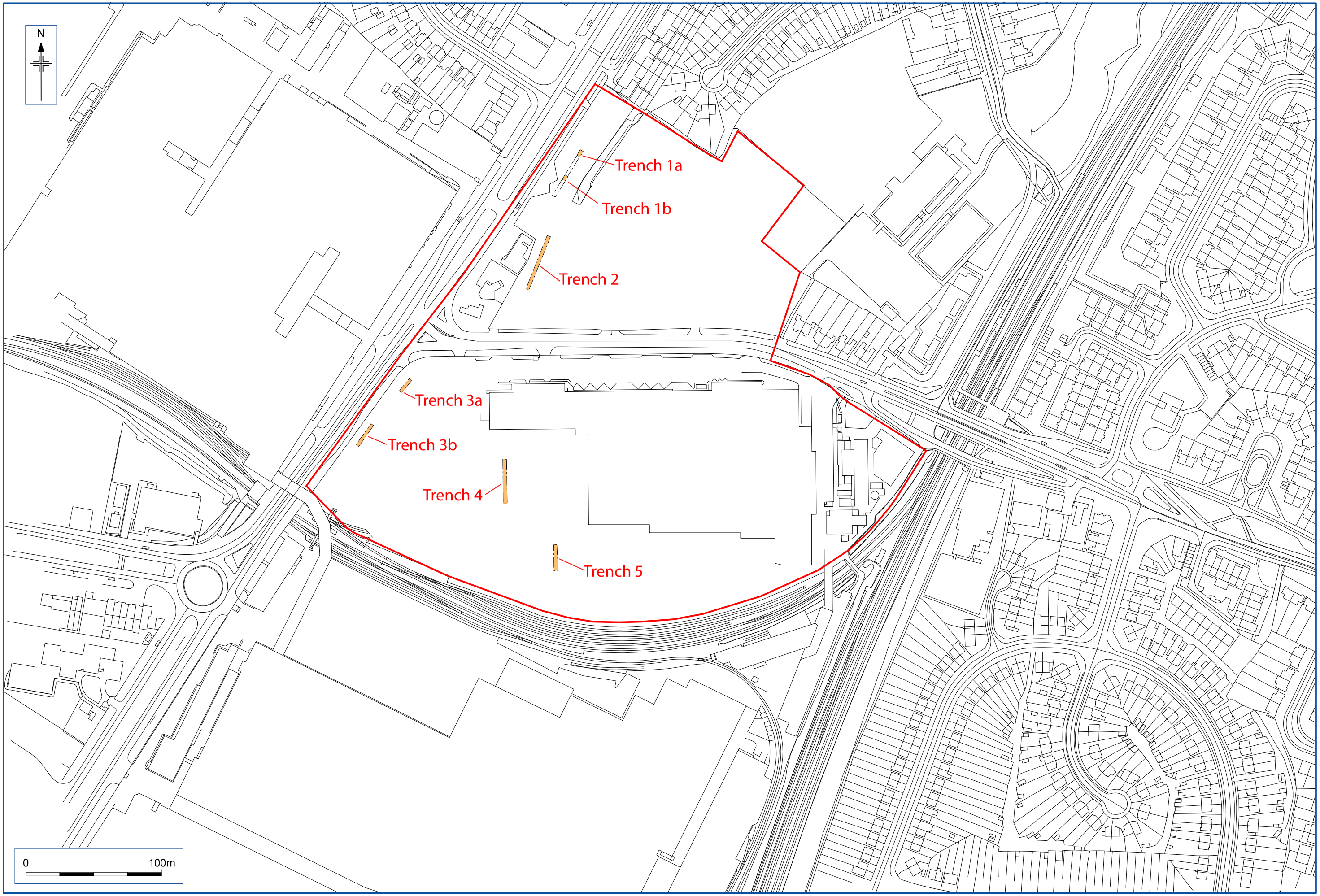
Plan of Trench 9

Figure 3



Section of Trench 10

Figure 4



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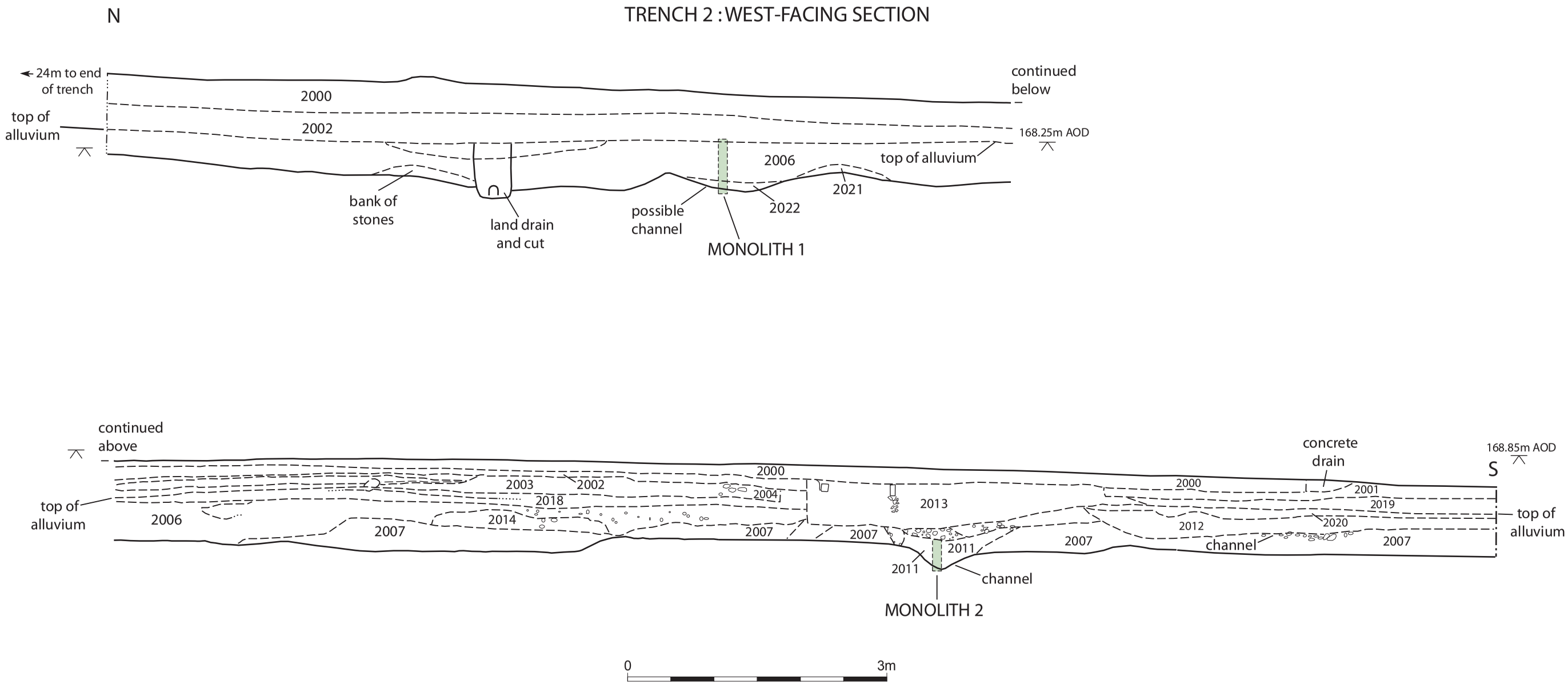
Trench location plan of 2003 evaluation (Patrick et al 2003)

Figure 5



Trench 2: West-facing section, recorded during 2003 evaluation (Patrick et al 2003)

Figure 6

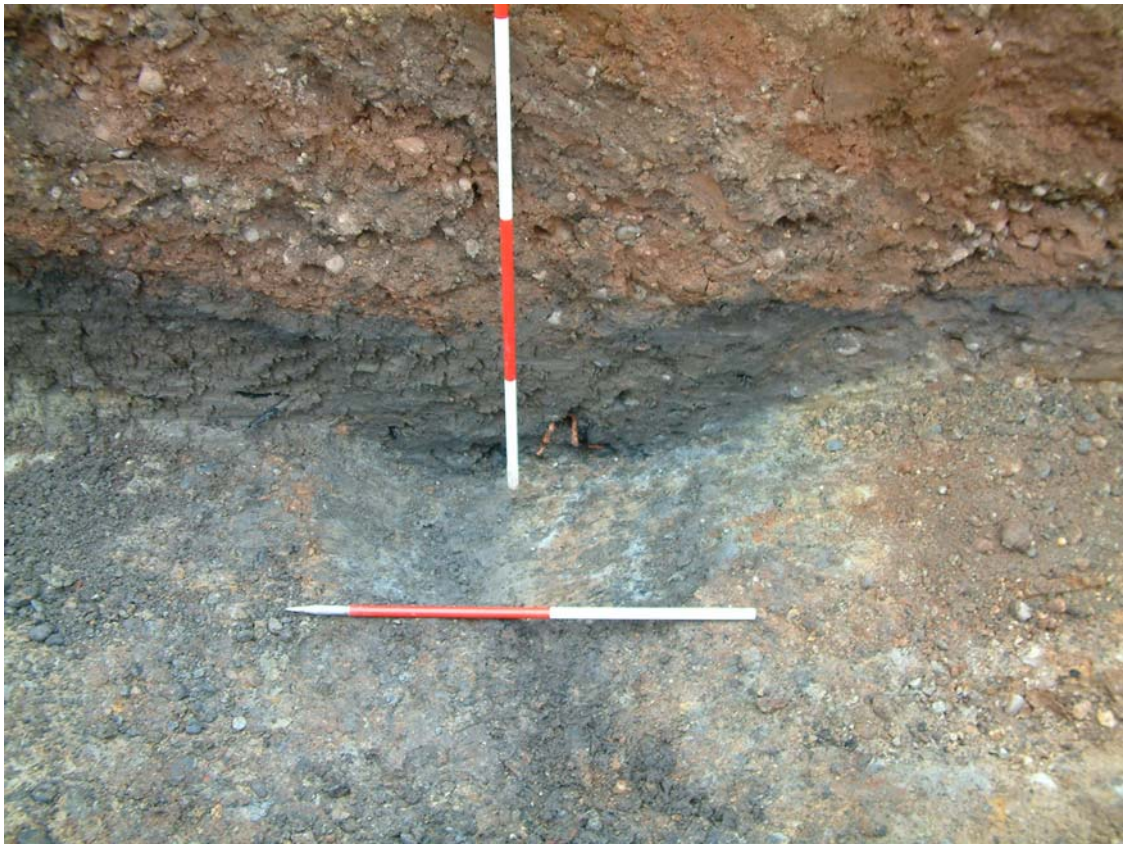


Plate 1. Channel (236) looking west

Plate 2. Longbridge House looking east showing walls (103, 105, 140, 141 and 145) and cobbled surface (142)

Plate 3. Wall (105) looking north

Plate 4. Cobbled surface (142) and walls (141 and 145) with postholes (113, 119, 123, 125 and 127) visible in the distance. Pit (129) is visible to the right of the image

Appendix 1 Trench descriptions

Trench 9

Maximum dimensions: Length: 17.0m Width: 7.5m Depth: 0.40-0.70m

Orientation: E-W

Main deposit description

Context	Classification	Description	Depth below ground surface (b.g.s) – top and bottom of deposits
101	Layer	Tarmac	0.0-0.08m
102	Layer	Blue/grey road stone levelling below tarmac. Loose and friable.	0.08-0.10m
103	Wall	Remaining brick wall of video shop running E-W in west of trench. Bonded with cement and sits upon a cement foundation.	0.40-0.50m
104	Wall	Brick wall running N-S in western bulk, 2m long, 20cm high. Consists of 2 courses of brick.	0.41-0.61m
105	Wall	Sandstone consisting of 8 large dressed blocks of sandstone not mortared together. Largest block measures 83cm-25cm-37cm. The wall runs in an E-W direction, with the outside edge on the north, as this edge appears to be flush.	0.52-0.77m
106	Layer	Dark brown silty clay, compact and cohesive. Contains frequent charcoal, mortar and pottery fragments and extends over much of trench 1.	0.55-1.0m
107	Natural	Blue/green sandy clay. Contains occasional small rounded stones. Compact and cohesive.	0.60m +
108	Layer	Red/pink angular road stone and demolition rubble. Contains frequent brick and tile fragments. Situated in most of the western half of the trench.	0.43-0.55m
109	Layer	Loose yellow sand levelling layer.	0.38-0.43m
110	Layer	Loose red sand levelling layer.	0.23-0.38m
111	Layer	Mixed red sand and gravel levelling layer.	0.23-0.38m
112	Wall	Concrete foundation of video shop walls.	1.07+m
113	Post hole	Vertical sided posthole 0.50m in diameter.	0.60-0.63m
114	Fill of (113)	Mid brown silty clay with occasional small rounded stone.	0.60-0.63m

115	Post hole	Irregular shaped posthole 0.40m in diameter.	0.60-1.00m
116	Fill of (115)	Grey-brown silty clay. Occasional small rounded stones and wood fragments.	0.60-1.00m
117	Terminus of ditch	Flat based ditch with gradually sloping sides. Running in an NE-SW direction. Only 1.5m exposed, 1.0m wide.	0.37-0.62m
118	Fill of (117)	Compact and cohesive mid brown silty clay with lenses of dark grey clay. Very sterile.	0.37-0.62m
119	Post hole	Large, 1.0m wide, post with flat bottom and gently sloping sides. Cut by posthole (135) on northern edge.	0.27-0.42m
120	Fill of (119)	Grey silty clay with occasional fragments of wood.	0.27-0.42m
121	Stake hole	Thin V-shaped stake hole with vertical sides	0.27-0.55m
122	Fill of (121)	Red-brown silty clay with occasional small rounded stones.	0.27-0.55m
123	Post hole	Small shallow post hole with rounded and base and concave sides, 0.35m wide.	0.35-0.60m
124	Fill of (123)	Mid grey-brown silty clay. Cohesive with frequent wood inclusions.	0.35-0.60m
125	Post hole	Post hole 0.20m wide with vertical sides and flat base. Occasional wooden fragments.	0.30-0.50m
126	Fill of (125)	Dark grey silty clay, cohesive and very sterile.	0.30-0.50m
127	Post hole	Wide post hole with stone post packing around edge, 0.20m deep with concave base.	0.30-0.50m
128	Fill of (127)	Light grey silty clay containing large stone around the edge of the cut.	0.30-0.50m
129	Pit	Pit cut, rounded square in plan, 0.70m in diameter with gently sloping sides and concave base. Around the edge of the pit are at minimum of 9 stakes were visible. These varied from 1-8cm in diameter.	0.35-0.55m
130	Fill of (129)	Light grey-brown silty clay with occasional small rounded stones.	0.35-0.55m
131	Post hole	Post hole with vertical sides and flat base, 0.35m in diameter.	0.30-0.40m
132	Fill of (131)	Pale yellow-brown sandy silt, cohesive and sterile.	0.30-0.40m
134	Foundation cut	Foundation cut for modern video shop wall (103), 0.61m wide, 0.10m wide.	0.40-0.50m
135	Post hole	Post cutting post hole (119) on northern edge, 0.30m wide with steep concave sides and flat base.	0.27-0.42m

136	Fill of (135)	Grey-brown silty clay, with frequent inclusions of small round silty clay.	0.27-0.42m
137	Foundation cut	Foundation cut for sandstone wall (105) running E-W. 0.45m wide with vertical sides.	0.52-0.85m
138	Fill of (137)	Fill of foundation cut for sandstone wall. Cohesive, dark brown silty clay with frequent small rounded stones and occasional mortar fragments.	0.52-0.85m
139	Fill of (134)	Grey clinker ash and gravel backfill of foundation cut. Very loose and friable.	0.40-0.55m
140	Wall	Brick wall running N-S, 3 courses high, bonded with pink cement mortar, 1.42m long, 0.28m wide, 0.33m thick.	0.43-0.0.76m
141	Wall	Brick wall running N-S, turning to E-W, 3 courses high. 3.03m long, 0.23m wide, 0.30m thick. Bonded with light brown cement mortar.	0.43-0.0.73m
142	Surface	Cobbled yard surface 2.30m long, 1.25m wide. Made of small to large rounded stone, lying directly upon the natural.	0.35-0.45m
143	Post hole	Small oblong posthole directly below wall (140). 0.10 wide, 0.19m long, 0.25cm deep.	0.43-0.68m
144	Fill of (143)	Mid brown silty clay with occasional wooden fragments.	0.43-0.68m
145	Wall	Brick wall running E-W, with brick lying on side. Two courses thick, 1.43m long, 0.40m wide.	0.35-0.45m
146	Foundation	Concrete foundation of wall (141), only visible on eastern side of wall. 0.20m wide, 0.30m thick. Seems to be a later addition perhaps to bolster the wall.	0.40-0.0.70m
147	Layer	Black clinker and ash levelling layer visible within the northern bulk. Very loose and friable.	0.08-0.43m
148	Floor	Layer of industrial bricks below (147), 12 bricks wide.	0.43-0.53m
149	Layer	Mixture of loose clinker ash levelling and red gravels, very loose and friable.	0.53-0.70m
150	Drain	Square drain within natural, each side containing 2 bricks, 0.20m wide.	0.37-0.47m
151	Wall	Brick wall running E-W in southern bulk, 5.0m long, 0.45m high. Contains both red brick and sandstone blocks similar to those in wall (105).	0.30-0.75m

Trench 10

Maximum dimensions: Length: 22.0m Width: 1.85m Depth: 1.75-2.75m

Orientation: N-S

Main deposit description

Context	Classification	Description	Depth below ground surface (b.g.s) – top and bottom of deposits
201	Layer	Mixture of loose clinker ash levelling and blue/grey gravels, very loose and friable.	0.0-0.15m
202	Layer	Mid brown sandy silt, moderately compact with frequent small rounded stones.	0.15-0.30m
203	Layer	Light brown/grey silty clay. Moderately compact and very sterile.	0.30-75m
204	Layer	Red sandy silt. Friable with frequent small-medium rounded stones.	0.15-1.50m
205	Layer	Mid brown sandy silt with occasional small-medium rounded stones and small charcoal fragments.	0.15-1.50m
206	Layer	Heavily striated sand layers (red, orange and grey). Very compact.	0.15-0.25m
207	Layer	Mid brown-grey sandy gravel. Moderately compact frequent small rounded stones.	0.25-0.40m
208	Layer	Red sands and gravels. Very friable with frequent small-large angular stones.	0.40-0.60m
209	Layer	Yellow-orange sandy silt, moderately compact with occasional small rounded stones.	0.60-0.75m
210	Layer	Dark grey-black organic clay moderately compact.	0.75-1.0m
211	Layer	Mid brown sandy silt, moderately compact with frequent small rounded stones.	0.15-0.50m
212	Layer	Orange sandy gravels. Frequent small-mod angular stone.	0.50-0.60m
213	Layer	Mid brown silty sands and gravels. Very compact and sterile.	0.60-1.40m
214	Layer	Light brown grey silty sand. Moderately compact with occasional small-medium rounded stones.	0.60-1.40m
215	Layer	Mid brown silty sands and gravels. Very compact and sterile.	0.40-1.75m

216	Layer	Light brown/yellow silty sand. Moderately compact with small-medium rounded stones and patches of blue organic clays.	0.40-1.75m
217	Layer	Red sands and gravels, moderately compact.	0.15-1.90m
218	Layer	Light brown/yellow silty sand. Moderately compact with small-medium rounded stones and patches of blue organic clays.	0.15-1.90m
219	Layer	Red sands and gravels, moderately compact.	0.15-1.90m
220	Layer	Light brown/yellow silty sand. Moderately compact with small-medium rounded stones.	0.15-1.60m
221	Layer	Light brown/yellow silty sand. Light brown/yellow silty sand. Moderately compact with small-medium rounded stones compact with small-medium rounded stones.	0.15-1.35m
222	Layer	Light brown sands and gravels, moderately compact with frequent small-medium rounded stones.	0.15-1.35m
223	Layer	Dark brown silty sand. Very compact with frequent small-medium rounded stones.	0.15-1.35m
224	Layer	Dark brown silty sand. Moderately compact with frequent small-medium rounded stones.	0.15-1.35m
225	Layer	Dark brown silty sand. Very compact with frequent small-medium rounded stones.	0.15-1.35m
226	Layer	Orange sands and gravels, very compact and cohesive. Frequent small rounded stones.	1.35-1.55m
227	Layer	Red sands and gravels, very compact and cohesive. Frequent small rounded stones.	0.15-1.10m
228	Layer	Dark grey organic sandy clay. Moderately compact and cohesive, contains moderate wooden and organic fragments.	1.25-1.50m
229	Natural	Blue/green sandy clay. Contains occasional small rounded stones. Compact and cohesive.	1.60m +
230	Layer	Light yellow-orange silty clay. Very compact and cohesive, containing frequent medium-large rounded stones.	2.0-2.10m
231	Layer	Large deposit of small-large rounded stones on northern edge of channel (236).	1.48-1.75m
232	Layer	Dark grey-black silty clay , very organic with frequent wooden fragments.	1.15-1.25m
233	Fill	Fill of palaeochannel 236. Dark brown/grey silty clay very humic. Moderately compact and cohesive.	1.75-2.0m

234	Fill	Fill of palaeochannel 236. Dark brown/black silty clay very humic. Moderately compact and cohesive	2.0-2.85m
235	Layer	Mid brown sands and gravels. Moderately compact containing frequent small rounded stones.	1.0-1.15m
236	Channel	Palaeochannel running E-W in base of trench, cut into natural (229), 1.50m wide with concave sides and base. Contains two fills (234) and (233).	1.75-2.85m