

ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING  
BRIEF AT  
20-23 THE TYTHING,  
WORCESTER

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Illustrated by Steve Rigby

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Project 2395  
Report 1178  
WCM 101156

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## Archaeological watching brief at 20-23 The Tything, Worcester

**James Goad and Erica Darch**

### Part 1 Project summary

*An archaeological watching brief was undertaken at Nos. 20-23 The Tything, Worcester, Worcestershire (NGR SO 8480 5560). It was undertaken on behalf of Neil Grinnall Homes, who intended to convert the existing buildings to mixed uses including residential apartments. The scheme also comprised the excavation of a large trench to act as a light well for future basement apartments. A planning application was submitted to Worcester City Council (Planning Ref. P02M0460; L02M0057). The project aimed to determine if any significant archaeological remains were present and if so to indicate what its location, date and nature were.*

*No significant archaeological features were located during the course of the groundworks. Several layers of material were recorded in the section of the light-well trench and a sample of artefactual material removed. These artefacts dated the layers from the medieval to the post-medieval period.*

## Part 2 Detailed report

### 1. Background

#### 1.1 Reasons for the project

An archaeological watching brief was undertaken at 20-23 The Tything, Worcester (NGR SO 8480 5560), on behalf of Neil Grinnall Homes. Neil Grinnall Homes intended to convert existing buildings in to a mix of commercial and residential units which necessitated some groundworks outside the buildings, and submitted a planning application to Worcester City Council (reference Po2Mo460 and L02M0057), who considered that a site of archaeological interest was affected (WCM 94530 and 93517).

#### 1.2 Project parameters

The project conforms to the *Standard and guidance for an archaeological watching brief* (IFA 1999). The project also conforms to a brief prepared by Worcester City Museums Archaeology Section (WCMAS 2003).

#### 1.3 Aims

The aims of the watching brief were from the brief - locate archaeological deposits and determine, if present, their extent, state of preservation, date, type, vulnerability and documentation. The purpose of this was to establish their significance and perhaps allow the opportunity to address certain research questions (listed in WCMAS 2003).

#### 1.4 Documentary search

Prior to fieldwork commencing a search was made of the Sites and Monuments Record (SMR). In addition the following sources were also consulted:

##### *Cartographic sources*

- Worcester. Speed 1610. BL King's Maps C7 C550: WCRO 4885/VI 899x426
- An exact ground plot of The City of Worcester as it stood fortified 3<sup>rd</sup> September 1651. Anon 1660. BL Kings Maps XLII
- Plan of Worcester City. Doharty 1742
- Plan of the City and Suburbs of Worcester from Actual Survey 1779. George Yound 1779
- Plan of the City and Suburbs of Worcester. Valentine Green 1795
- Plan of the City and Suburbs of Worcester. Nash 1781/1799
- Map of Worcester. Eaton 1810
- A Plan of The City and Environs of Worcester. T. Eaton 1829. From "A History of Worcester"
- A Map of the City and Suburbs of Worcester. Clements 1835
- Plan of Worcester. Bentley 1840

- 
- 1:2500 Ordnance Survey Map 1887-1888. Reproduced at 1:1000
  - 1:2500 Ordnance Survey Map 1904. Reproduced at 1:1000
  - 1:2500 Ordnance Survey Map 1924. Reproduced at 1:1000

*Documentary sources*

- Edwards 1992
- Barker 1968-69
- Hughes 1980
- Carver 1980

## 1.5 **Fieldwork**

### 1.5.1 **Fieldwork strategy**

Fieldwork was undertaken on 22<sup>nd</sup> August 2003.

A single light-well trench, with a total area of just over 30m<sup>2</sup>, was excavated adjacent to the upstanding buildings (see Figure 5).

The excavation was undertaken using a tracked 360° excavator and employing a toothed bucket. The machine excavated the trench at an angle, with the sides of the trench being battered back for health and safety considerations. As a result of these groundworks the portion of the section visible for recording was limited. Wherever possible, clean surfaces were inspected and a drawn and photographic record produced of the deposits visible. Deposits were recorded according to standard Service practice (CAS 1995).

### 1.5.2 **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.

## 1.6 **Artefacts**

### 1.6.1 **Artefact recovery policy**

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

### 1.6.2 **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 1994).

## 1.7 **Environment**

### 1.7.1 **Sampling policy**

No samples with potential for environmental analysis were identified during this project.

## 1.8 **The methods in retrospect**

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

## 2. **Topographical and archaeological context**

Worcester lies in the valley of the River Severn with the historic core situated on the east bank of the river on a terrace composed of sand and gravel which rises to a height of around 26m OD (Worcester Terrace 1982) overlying Mercian Mudstone (Keuper Marl). Settlements date back to the Iron Age through to the present day (Barker 1969, 9-42).

The area under investigation is registered on Worcester City Historic Environment Record as WCM 94530 and 93517, and within City Archaeologically Sensitive Area 18 and the Foregate Street and The Tything Conservation Area (WCMAS 2003). The site is to the north of Worcester's historic core and outside the area of the medieval walled city and is situated to the south of St. Oswald's Almshouses (WCM 96012), on the southern side of St. Oswald's Road.

The medieval hospital of St. Oswald's was founded in remembrance of St. Oswald and probable that it is contemporary with the planned medieval suburb of the 11<sup>th</sup> or 12<sup>th</sup> centuries. The hospital has survived through the medieval period in various forms, suffering periods of neglect until extensive repairs in the mid 17<sup>th</sup> century. The resulting complex of buildings are visible on George Young's map of 1779 (Goad and Darch 2003) and can be made out on Figure 6. The hospital was extended across part of the site to the south of St. Oswald's Road in the 1680's, and there was also the potential for part of the medieval St. Oswald's cemetery to be present (WCMAS 2003).

A number of archaeological investigations have been made at St. Oswald's Almshouses. Most significantly, fieldwork in 1990 and 1991 revealed a substantial stone wall dating to the medieval period. The wall was substantial enough to have supported a stone building, possibly the medieval church associated with the hospital. The excavations also produced a lot of demolition debris from the medieval period, along with medieval and post-medieval burials (Edwards 1992).

The site lies within the medieval Foregate Street suburb, which originated in the 11<sup>th</sup> or 12<sup>th</sup> centuries. The area of the suburb spread north from the medieval town walls (now the line of The Butts/Shaw Street) along Foregate Street and The Tything. The area between what is now Castle Street and the medieval walls was known as the "inner suburb" (Hughes 1980).

The suburb, was home to a widespread brick and tile-making industry. A tile-making kiln was discovered at 9-10 The Tything (WCM 101002, Miller forthcoming).

The northern end of the area was not affected by a period of decay and degeneration that affected the southern end of the suburb by the 17<sup>th</sup> century. Although pressure on housing caused a sub-division of plots, most houses had frontages of fourteen feet or more and extensive ground at the rear. At the time of the Siege of Worcester, the inner suburb was demolished to make a path for patrolling cavalry. The only substantial buildings left were at Whiteladies Priory, just to the north of St. Oswald's (Hughes 1980).

The suburb seems to have been re-developed heavily in the 18<sup>th</sup> century, and many of the buildings built then are still standing.

### 3. Description

The contexts listed are presented in Table 2 with Table 1 summarising the artefacts recovered. The trenches and features recorded are shown in Figures 2 and 5.

#### 3.1 Artefact Analysis

The material recovered was fairly abraded and consisted entirely of medieval to post-medieval flat roof tile and brick.

*Table 1: artefact assemblage*

Context	Material	Type	Total	Weight (g)	Notes	Date range
102	Tile	Flat roof tile	2	63	One die stamp	Late medieval / post-medieval
102	Brick		1	17	Abraded fragment	Medieval / post-medieval
103	Tile	Flat roof tile	1	290	Mortar still attached	13 <sup>th</sup> to 18 <sup>th</sup> century

##### 3.1.1 Medieval and post-medieval artefacts

All contexts from which artefacts were recovered had a broad *terminus post quem* date in the medieval to post-medieval period.

One piece of tile from context 102 had a stamp consisting of seven impressions forming a circle. This was very similar to stamp 12 recovered from excavations at Deansway, Worcester which was thought to be a distorted version of another stamp, the Deansway stamped tiles being from periods 10 (15<sup>th</sup> to 17<sup>th</sup> century) and 11 (17<sup>th</sup> to 19<sup>th</sup> century) (Fagan 2001). The brick fragment, stamped and unstamped tiles from the site are also thought to be late medieval to post-medieval in date.

Roof tiles are often difficult to date closely and as these were a sample from the excavation the *terminus post quem* dates given for each context are tentative. Given the urban location and the proximity to a tile kiln at 9-10 The Tything (WCM 101002; D Miller, forthcoming) the presence of medieval or post-medieval tile and brick is unsurprising.

### 4. Discussion

#### 4.1 Phase 1 Natural deposits

The natural orange sand in this area was located around 1.30m from the top of the present ground surface.

#### 4.2 Prehistoric to Roman

There were no artefacts or features identified from these periods at all. It would seem as though there is negative evidence thus far for Roman settlement on this side of The Tything, as seen in investigative work at St. Oswald's and Alice Ottley School (Edwards 1992 and Goad 2003 respectively).

#### 4.3 **Medieval and post-medieval**

All the finds recovered from the trench were dated to this broad period. The material is indicative of material produced from the Worcester “inner suburb” tile and brick-making industry, which was established in this city quarter from the late medieval period onwards. There was no evidence to answer any questions as to the development or enclosure of the medieval suburb. The layers recorded in section perhaps point to material that had accumulated at the back of the properties which fronted on to The Tything. No evidence of any relationship with St. Oswald’s Hospital was discovered, nor any for the destruction of the suburb in the Civil War.

#### 5. **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 Neil Grinnall Homes at 20-23 The Tything, Worcester, Worcestershire (NGR SO 8480 5560; WCM 101156). During the course of the groundworks no archaeological features were noticed, but layers of material present in the section of the groundworks were dated via artefactual evidence from the medieval through to the post-medieval periods. The layers themselves seem to be dumped material, which perhaps had accumulated at the rear of the properties fronting on to The Tything. The artefactual material within the layers reflected the industrial nature of The Tything suburb in the late medieval and early post-medieval periods.*

#### 6. **The archive**

The archive consists of:

- 1 Fieldwork progress records AS2
- 1 Photographic records AS3
- 8 Colour digital images
- 1 Scale drawings
- 1 Box of finds
- 1 Computer disk

The project archive is intended to be placed at:

Worcestershire County Museum

Hartlebury Castle

Hartlebury

Near Kidderminster

Worcestershire DY11 7XZ

Tel Hartlebury (01299) 250416

#### 7. **Acknowledgements**

The Service would like to thank the following for their kind assistance in the successful conclusion of this project, Neil Grinnall Homes Ltd. and James Dinn.



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## 8. Personnel

The fieldwork and report preparation was led by James Goad. The project manager responsible for the quality of the project was Hal Dalwood. Fieldwork was undertaken by James Goad, finds analysis by Erica Darch and illustration by Steve Rigby.

## 9. Bibliography

Barker, P A, 1969-9 The origins of Worcester, *Trans Worcestershire Archaeol Soc* 3 ser, **2**

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

Edwards, R E, 1992 Trial excavation and salvage recording at St. Oswald's Almshouses, Worcester, *Trans Worcestershire Archaeol Soc*, 3 ser vol. **13**, 181-191

Fagan, L, 2001, The medieval roof tiles from Deansway, Worcester, in H. Dalwood and R. Edwards (eds) *Deansway, Worcester: excavations by Charles Mundy 1988-89 draft publication report*. Archaeological Service, Worcestershire County Council, report **920**, vol. 3, 109-129

Goad, J A and Darch, E 2003 *An archaeological evaluation at Alice Ottley School, The Upper Tything, Worcester*. Worcestershire County Archaeological Service, Worcestershire County Council, report **1171**

Hughes, P M, 1980 Houses and property in post-reformation Worcester – a topographical survey, *Trans Worcestershire Archaeol Soc*, 3 ser vol. **7** in Carver 1980, 258, 276-277, 269-92

Hurst, J D, 1994 (as amended) *Pottery fabrics. A multi-period series for the County of Hereford and Worcester*, County Archaeological Service, Hereford and Worcester County Council, report, **445**

IFA, 1999 *Standard and guidance for an archaeological watching brief*, Institute of Field Archaeologists

Miller, D, forthcoming, A Medieval Tile Kiln, in: *Worcestershire Recorder*, Autumn 2003, no. 68

WCMAS, 2003 Brief for an archaeological watching brief, 20-23 The Tything, Worcester

## 10. Abbreviations

WCM Numbers prefixed with 'WCM' are the primary reference numbers used by the Worcester City Sites and Monuments Record.

NMR National Monuments Record.

SMR Sites and Monuments Record.

## **Appendix 1 Trench descriptions**

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## Table 2

### Trench 1

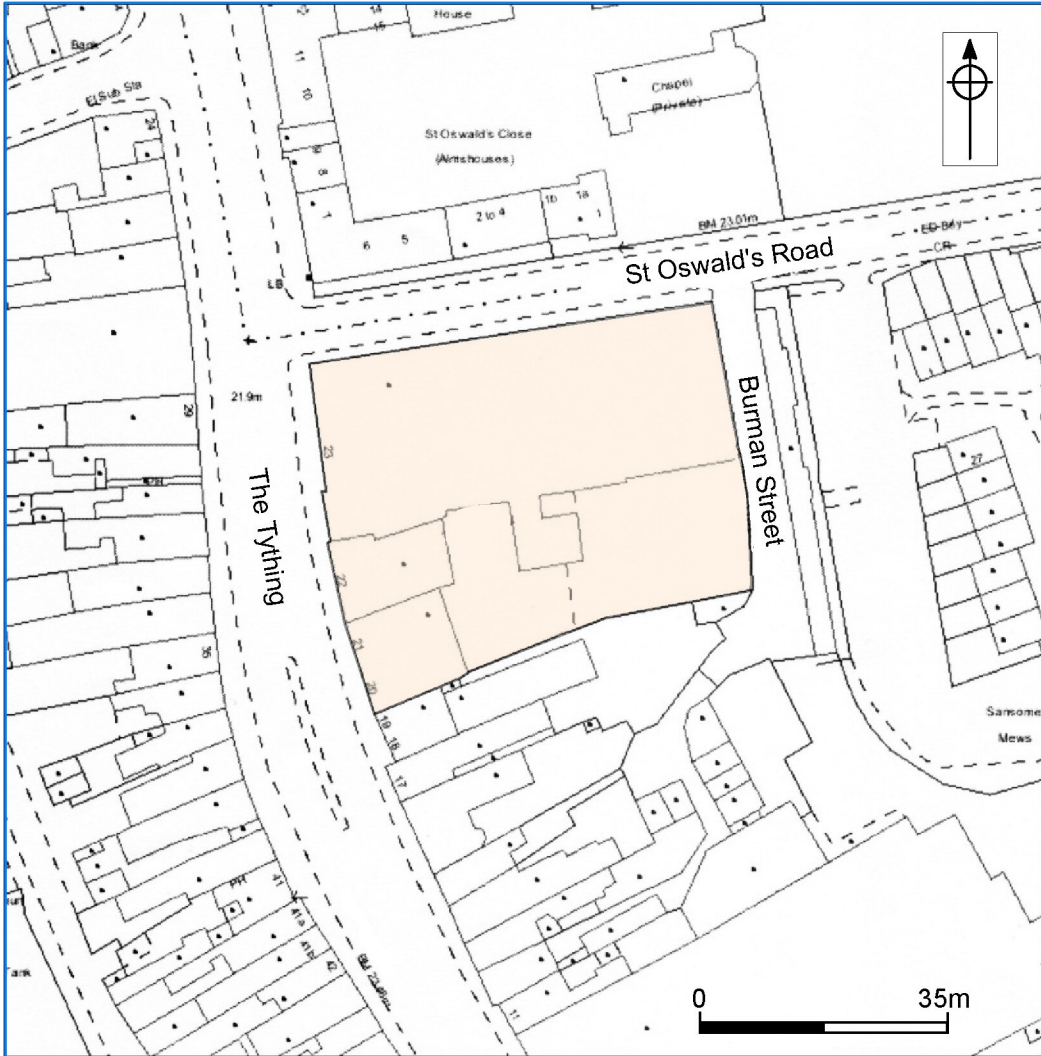
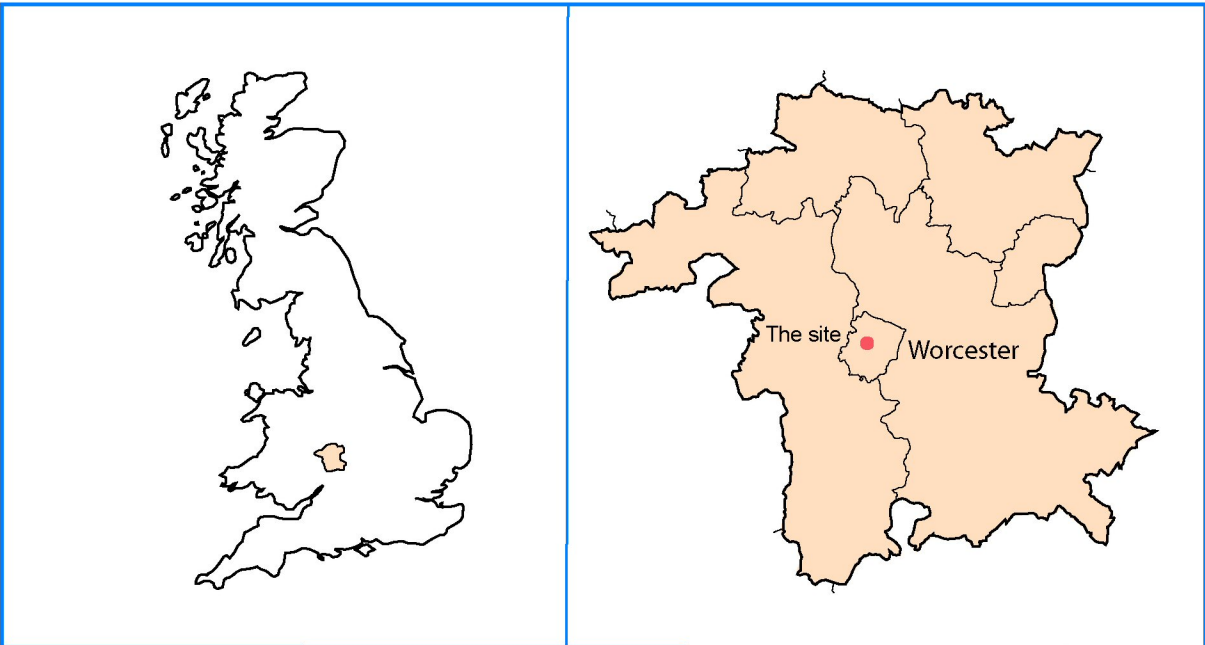
Site area: Rear of 20-23 The Tything

Maximum dimensions: Length: 8.60m Width: 3.50m Depth: 1.90m

Orientation: East-west

Main deposit description

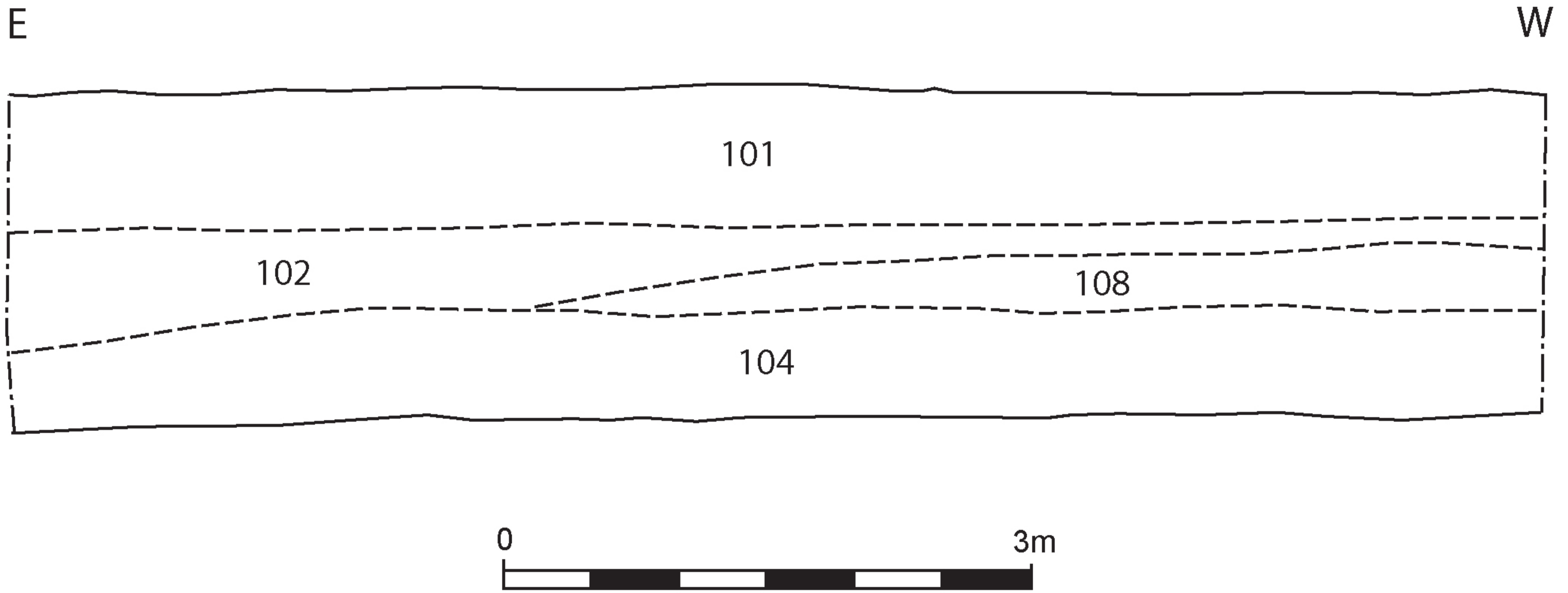
Context	Classification	Description	Depth below ground surface (b.g.s) – top and bottom of deposits
100		Trench	
101	Layer	Modern overburden. Mixed material – both dark grey sandy silt and clay. Large quantity of rubble inclusions, brick, tile etc. Modern material	0.70-0.75m
102	Layer	Made ground. Composed of light grey sandy silt. Occasional large to medium rounded stones. Occasional brick and tile	0.75-1.50m
103	Layer	Orange and yellow sand. Moderate small to medium rounded stone inclusions. A thin interface layer between 102 and the natural	0.90-1.20m
104	Natural	Orange sand. Occasional small rounded stones	1.20-1.90m



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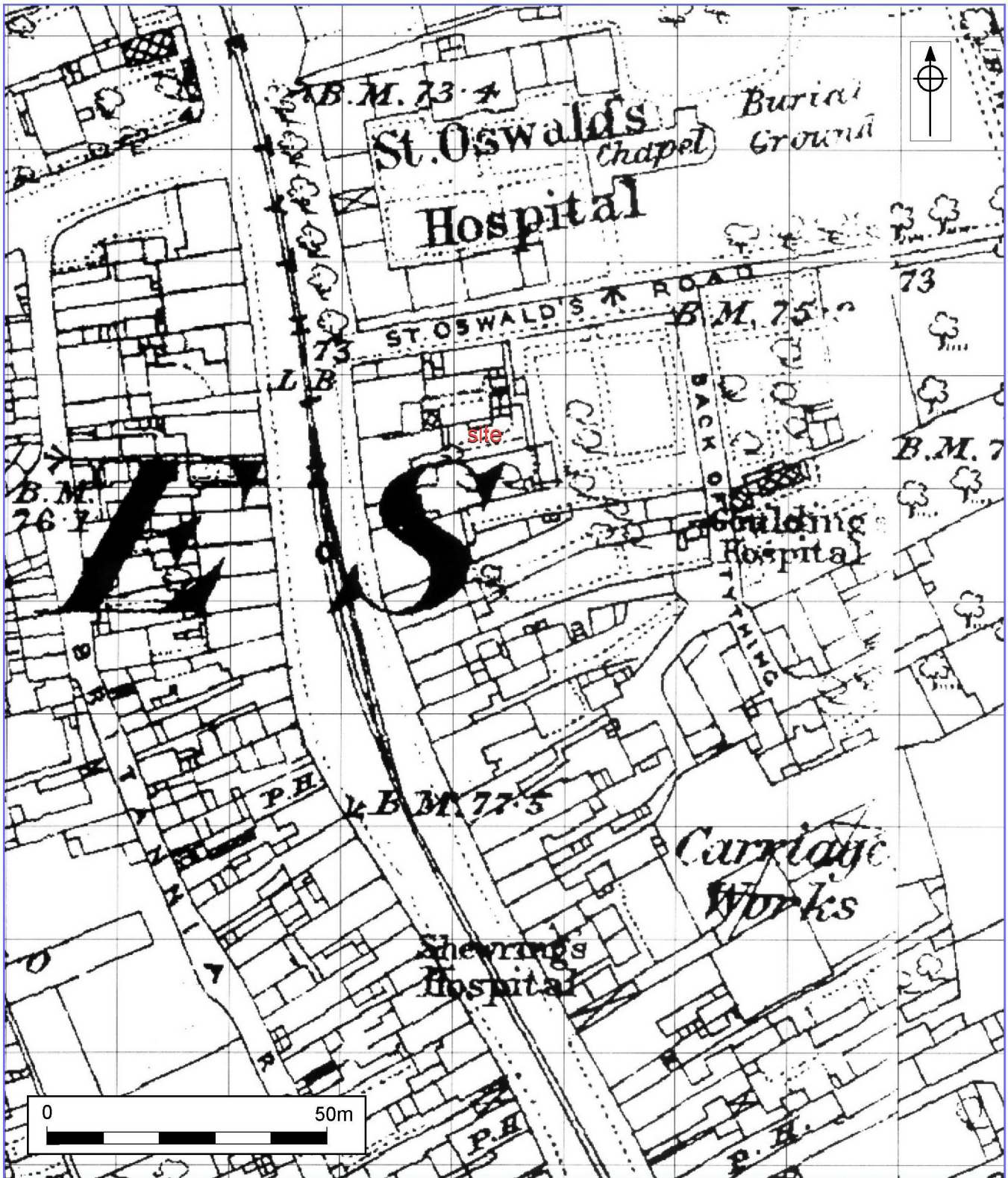
Location of the site.

Figure 1



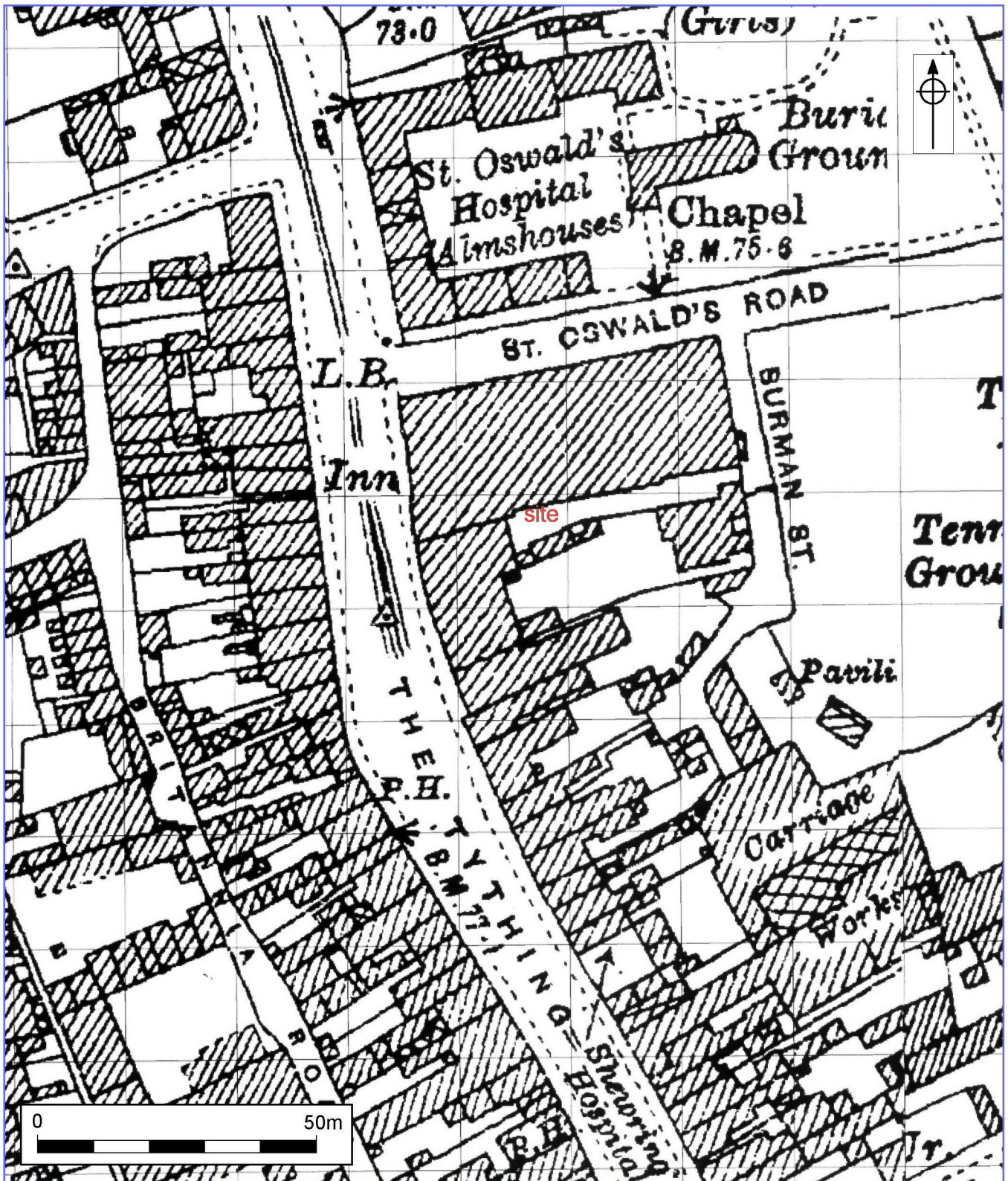
*North facing section*

*Figure 2*



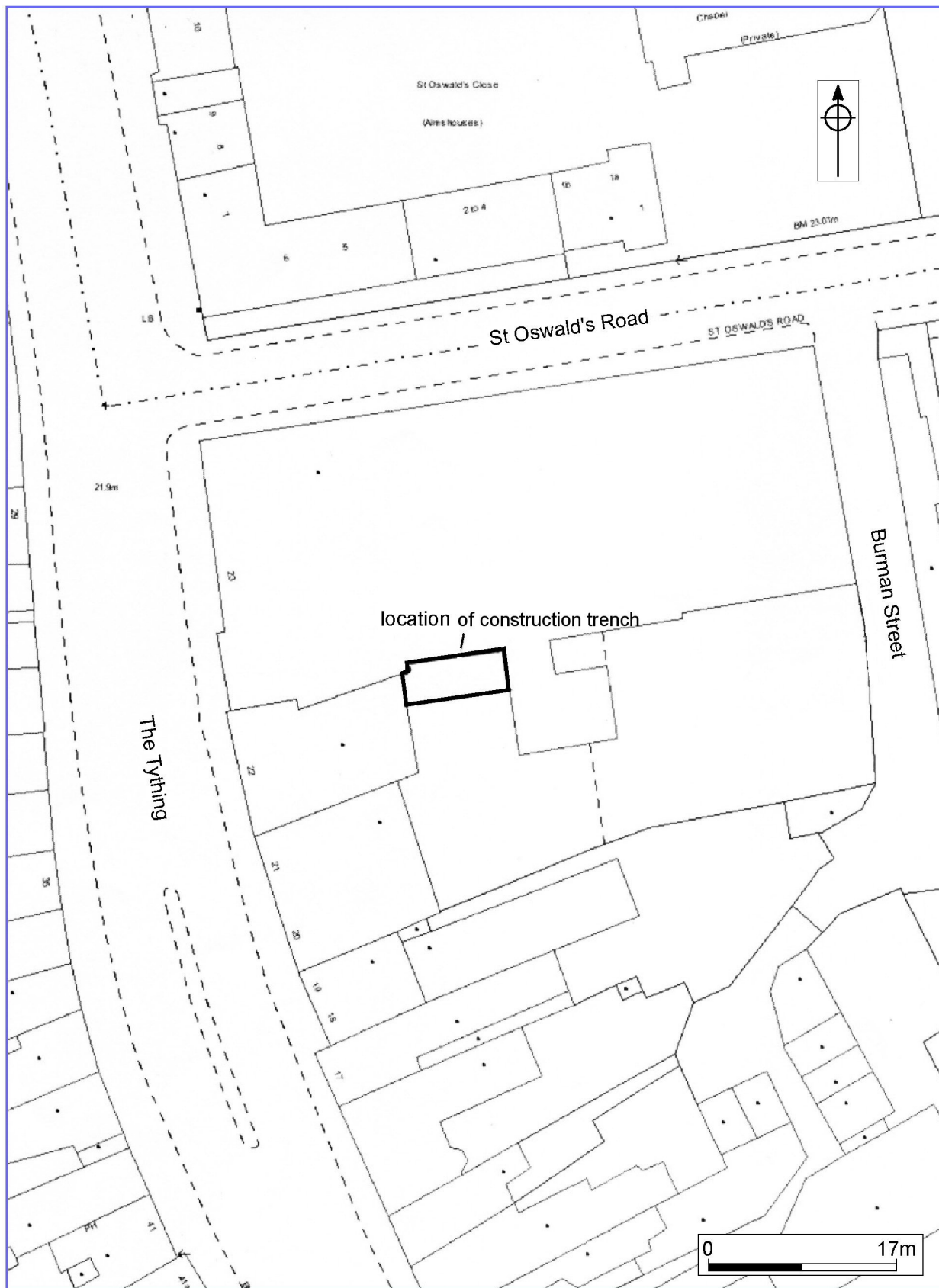
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Figure 3



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 Worcestershire County Council LA09073L 2000.

Figure 4







To the Right Worshipsful Thomas Williams Esq: Mayor,  
 to Right Honourable George Earl of Coventry, Recorder,  
 the Aldermen, the Common Council, and the rest of the  
 Members of the Corporation; this Plate of the  
**PLAN of the CITY and SUBURBS of  
 WORCESTER.**  
 Presented by Them to this Work, is most Respectfully  
 Dedicated, by their Most Devoted and  
 Obliged humble Servant  
 Valentine Green.

REFERENCES.

- |   |                                   |   |  |
|---|-----------------------------------|---|--|
| A | St. John's Church. See P. 53.     | L | St. Peter's Church. See P. 44.                     |
| B | St. Clements. p. 52.              | M | Meeting House of the People call'd Quakers. p. 66. |
| C | Berkley's Chapel. p. 69.          | N | St. of the People call'd Methodists. p. 66.        |
| D | Presbyterian Meet. House. p. 66.  | O | St. Swithun's Church. p. 57.                       |
| E | All Saints Church. p. 55.         | P | St. Martin's. p. 59.                               |
| F | St. Andrews. p. 52.               | Q | Anabaptist's Meeting House. p. 66.                 |
| G | Lady Huntingdon's Chapel. p. 66.  | R | St. Nicholas's Church. p. 63.                      |
| H | St. Albans Church. p. 48.         | S | Roman Catholick Chapel. p. 66.                     |
| I | St. Helen's. p. 49.               | T | Meeting House of the People call'd Quakers. p. 66. |
| J | The Cathedral. p. 32, & 270, 261. | U | St. Oswald's Chapel. p. 71.                        |
| K | St. Michael's. p. 47.             | V | Independent's Meeting House. p. 66.                |
| L | City Library. p. 23.              | W | Sir C. F. Nitters p. 242, Vol. I. — 65.            |



Blockhouse Fields; Here the Battle  
 between the King and the

Extract from Map of Worcester, Valentine Green 1795