

ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING
BRIEF AT 40-41 FOREGATE
STREET, WORCESTER,
WORCESTERSHIRE

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Archaeological watching brief at 40-41, Foregate Street, Worcester, Worcestershire

James Goad and Erica Darch

Part 1 Project summary

An archaeological watching brief was undertaken at 40-41, Foregate Street, Worcester, Worcestershire (NGR SO 8486 5533). It was undertaken on behalf of the Kingsway English Centre, who intended the redevelopment of the building, including the demolition of a single storey warehouse and repairs and alterations to the existing building, for which a planning application had been submitted. The project aimed to determine if any significant archaeology was present and if so to indicate what its location, date and nature were.

The project succeeded in revealing a number of features both within the present building and in the area of the new development to the rear. A collection of brick walls were found inside no. 41, along with what appeared to be a brick flue against the northern wall. This flue was cut through a stony layer dated to the 17th century. Trenching against the walls inside and outside the building also revealed the stone foundation courses of the building resting on top of a dark garden/agricultural soil. In the area of development outside the house the groundworks revealed a rather sterile stony layer cut by two pits. One of the pits was dated to the 17th century.

Part 2 Detailed report

1. Background

1.1 Reasons for the project

An archaeological watching brief was undertaken at 40-41, Foregate Street, Worcester, Worcestershire (NGR SO 8486 5533), on behalf of the Kingsway English Centre. The client intended to demolish a single storey warehouse, in addition to repairing and altering the existing building. The client has submitted a planning application via their agent, Nick Joyce Architects, to Worcester City Council (reference P02M0263; L02M0030), who considered that a site of archaeological interest was affected (WCM 94511).

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 the Worcester City Archaeology Section (WCMAS 2002) and for which a project proposal (including detailed specification) was produced (AS 2002).

1.3 Aims

The aims of the watching brief were from the brief were to try and locate archaeological deposits during the course of the groundworks and determine, if present, their extent, state of preservation, date and type.

2. Methods

2.1 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

- Plan of the City and Suburbs of Worcester by George Young. 1779
- Plan of the City and Suburbs of Worcester by Valentine Green. 1795
- First edition Ordnance Survey map, County Series for Worcestershire. Sheet no. XXXIII (scale 1:2500). 1887
- Plan of 40-41 Foregate Street by Nick Joyce Architects, drawing number 619/117 (scale 1:100). 2002

Documentary sources

- Barker 1968-69
- Dalwood *et al* 1994
- Dalwood and Edwards 2001

-
- Edwards, Griffin and Dalwood 2002
 - Hughes 1980
 - Jones and Vyce 2000

2.2 **Fieldwork**

2.2.1 **Fieldwork strategy**

The project conformed to a brief set by Worcester City Museum Archaeology Section (WCMAS 2002).

Fieldwork was undertaken between 29th January and 11th March 2003.

Inside the existing building four trenches were opened along with a whole series of groundworks outside. These trenches and pits amounted to just over 27m² in area. The location of the trenches is indicated in Figure 2.

In the interior of the building the contractors excavated trenches by hand. At the rear of the building a concrete surface was removed by a 360° tracked excavator and the immediate underlying layer reduced by up to 600mm and regraded at the western end of the development area to form a ramp. All work was carried out under archaeological observation. Clean surfaces were inspected and selected deposits were excavated to retrieve artefactual material, as well as to determine their nature. All deposits were recorded according to standard Service practice (CAS 1995). To facilitate quick recording on a site that was quite small, and busy with contractors and plant, drawings were annotated with deposit descriptions and not recorded on the standard context sheets.

2.2.2 **Structural analysis**

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

2.3 **Artefacts**

2.3.1 **Artefact recovery policy**

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

2.3.2 **Method of analysis**

All hand retrieved finds were examined. They were identified, quantified and dated to period. A *terminus post quem* (TPQ) 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).

2.4 **Environment**

2.4.1 **Sampling policy**

It was thought that environmental samples were unnecessary on this occasion due to the nature of the site.

2.5 **The methods in retrospect**

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

3. **Topographical and archaeological context**

Worcester lies in the plain of the River Severn just above its confluence with the Teme and is situated on a terrace of sand and gravel overlying Mercian Mudstone (Keuper Marl), which rises to a height of 26m OD (Ragg *et al* 1984).

The historic core of the city is situated on the east bank of the river and evidence of the earliest settlement dates as far back as the Iron Age, and continued, with varying degrees of intensity, through the Roman and medieval periods to the present day (Barker 1969, 9-42).

The site is within the Roman and Medieval City Archaeologically Sensitive Area (no 18) and within the Foregate Street and Tything Conservation Area. 41, Foregate Street is listed as Grade II (WCMAS 2002).

Roman settlement

The property backs on to Farrier Street, which has subject to archaeological evaluation and excavation (Dalwood *et al* 1994). This investigation produced evidence of extensive Roman industry outside the main centre of the city, served by a major road. A 3rd or 4th century date for this activity seems likely. The later date for this iron-working contrasts with the predominantly 2nd and 3rd century dates for the industry at Deansway (Dalwood and Edwards 2001).

The road present in this area would have been a continuation of one serving the city centre. A sequence of Roman roads were detected during the redevelopment of Broad Street in the late 1960's. Initially constructed of cobbles and later capped with iron slag, the road ran north to south in to the Roman centre (Dalwood *et al* 1994).

The Magistrate's Court site on Castle Street had quite a complex series of stratified deposits, with timber roundhouses present in the earliest phase of the site, succeeded by a rectangular timber building which was altered and extended in subsequent phases (Jones and Vyce 2000).

The material and deposits of the site of the Castle Street Police Station gave appeared to be domestic and agricultural as well as pastoral, given the bone evidence for knackered. Evidence for iron-working either within the excavated area was negative (Edwards, Griffin and Dalwood 2002).

The varied character of Roman occupation north of the city walls has demonstrated that there is a moderate potential for activity in this part of the Foregate Street/Farrier Street area.

Post-Roman to medieval activity

Evidence on these sites for continuity of settlement in the post-Roman period is largely negative. Around Farrier Street, after the iron smelting industry declined, the whole area seems to have reverted back to agricultural use (Dalwood *et al* 1994).

Evidence from the Police Station site seems quite similar to Farrier Street in this period. The soil horizon overlying the Roman deposits on the site produced a certain amount of abraded pottery, indicating that the area was cultivated and manured during this time (Edwards, Griffin and Dalwood *et al* 2002).

The site lies within the medieval Foregate Street suburb, which originated in the late 11th or 12th centuries (WCMAS 2002). The area of the suburb spread north from the medieval town walls (now the line of The Butts/Shaw and Sansome 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”.

On the west side of Foregate Street the settlement seems to have begun as a comfortable artisan suburb but gradually declined in to a more shabby district. Around the early 16th century brick and tile manufacture were commonplace here as demand increased, probably making the area smoky and dirty (Hughes 1980).

The Poor Law Act of 1536 placed the responsibility for the poor firmly on the parishes, and during this time Foregate Street lost its local parish church (St. Oswald’s). As the inhabitants of the street paid neither tithes or poor rates, their welfare was no one’s concern. The area became a no-man’s-land between the parishes of St.Nicholas’ and Claines, providing a dumping ground for the poor. During this time the Bishop let out 11 properties in Foregate Street in the early 17th century, all at very low rents (Hughes 1980).

At the time of the Siege of Worcester during the Civil War, the inner suburb was demolished to make a path for patrolling cavalry. The Parliamentary Survey of the time recorded that it had been “Burnt by the Cavaliers” (Hughes 1980).

Post-medieval to modern

Whilst the area at the eastern end of Farrier Street had remained agricultural or market garden land throughout the medieval period, in the 18th century the suburbs grew up again. (see Figures 4 and 5). On the Police Station site formal gardens were laid out to be replaced with substantial buildings in the 19th century (Edwards, Griffin and Dalwood 2002).

4. **Description**

The quantification of the artefacts are presented in Table 1, with Table 2 summarising the pottery recovered. The contexts are listed in Tables 3-7 in the appendix. The trenches and features recorded are shown in Figures 2 and 3.

4.1 **Artefact analysis**

The assemblage came from three stratified contexts. It ranged from possible medieval to possible modern, but was mostly post-medieval in date. Most of the material was quite abraded. A summary of the artefacts recovered can be seen in the table below.

Table 1

Material	Type	Number of items	Weight (grammes)
Tile	Flat roof tile	5	745
Ceramic	Miscellaneous	1	716
Bone	Animal	0	466
Pot	Post-medieval	8	413
Glass	Vessel	3	211
Brick		2	42
Shell	Oyster	2	24
Ceramic		1	22
Mortar		3	13
Pipe	Bowl	1	7
Pipe	Stem	3	5
Bone		1	1

Quantification of the artefacts

The largest group of material by weight was flat roof tile. This was of a long-lived type and could not be more closely dated than 13th to 18th century. Also recovered from context 5 was part of the base and foot of a rough ceramic vessel of unknown function. The largest group of material by count was post-medieval pottery. A summary of the pottery can be seen in the table below.

Table 2

Name	Fabric	Total	Weight	Date	Period
Post-medieval red ware	78	7	375g	17th century	Post-medieval
Stoneware	81	1	38		Post-medieval

Quantification of the pottery**Medieval**

The only possible medieval material was the flat roof tile, which may have been medieval or post-medieval as it could not be closely dated.

Post-medieval

Context 5 was associated with artefacts with a *TPQ* date of (probably mid to late) 17th century. Context 15 contained a piece of brick which may have been post-medieval or modern, but the more datable finds were of 17th century date, suggesting that it was probably of the same date as context 5.

Context 9 contained no dateable material (bone, mortar and a fragment of brick), but is stratigraphically earlier than late 18th / early 19th century buildings.

5. **Discussion**5.1 **Phase 1 Natural deposits**

No natural deposits were encountered during the course of the groundworks.

5.2 Roman

No Roman deposits were encountered during the groundworks. There is no evidence for the Roman industrial or domestic activity found further to the southern end of Farrier Street (Dalwood *et al* 1994) extending this far east in to the area of the medieval inner suburb.

5.3 Medieval

No features from this period were found during the course of the project. However, context 5 inside the existing 18th century building produced a piece of tile, which was dateable to this period. It's possible that this was of local manufacture as the tile industry was quite extensive in the inner suburb in the 16th century. The layer it came from, however, dated to the 17th century.

The absence of medieval pottery is surprising in view of the current research framework, which suggests the Foregate Street/Tything suburb originated in the 12th century and that, in the later medieval period, some parts of the suburb were engaged in the industrial activities such as tile making . However, other fieldwork in the suburb has also failed to detect evidence for occupation during this period (H.Dalwood pers comm). The limited scope of the groundworks during the course of the project also probably reduced the chances of revealing more dateable deposits.

5.4 Post-medieval

Some of the features found date to fairly early on in this period. Within the upstanding 18th century building, a rubbly layer (context 5) seems to predate a series of walls and brick features which are probably contemporary with the construction of the house. This layer could be a demolition or levelling layer to flatten out the ground prior to the construction of the house. The small amount of building material (brick, tile and mortar) is also consistent with an area that has seen re-building activity several times since the medieval period, as indicated in the Brief.

Although no dateable artefacts were found within context 9 located in trench 3 (see Figure 2), this context can be dated roughly by its relationship with the building built on it, which dates to the late 18th century. Trench 3 showed that the foundation courses of the building were laid within this context and therefore post-dated it. This layer was quite dark and organic and seemed consistent with garden soil.

Some of the deposits outside the building were dated to the 17th century. Pit 16 (see Figure 3) produced dateable finds from this period. It was cut through layers 14 and 17, giving these layers a date of deposition from the 17th century or earlier. Layer 14 was a rather sterile deposit, being both free of any artefacts or organic material.

The deposits from the area outside the 18th century house seem to be consistent with garden activity found to the rear of most buildings which front on to roads, and take after the medieval "strip" form of medieval property divisions in towns. Layer 9 appeared to be a garden soil, which perhaps dates to the late medieval or early post-medieval period.

The evidence indicates that prior to the construction of the present 18th century house on the site, the area had been used for various domestic purposes. Although the finds assemblage is quite small, it can be regarded as largely consistent with domestic activity in the post-medieval period. The presence of garden soil indicates that the area could have been market garden land. However, it's likely that this was land to the rear of houses in the medieval period up to the Civil War until the demolition of the inner suburb. The evidence of gardening and pitting would be consistent with such a domestic purpose in houses pre-dating the Civil War. There is very little evidence for activity before the post-medieval period, or for any industrial use of the site.

6. **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.

A watching brief was undertaken on behalf of the Kingsway English Centre at 40-41 Foregate Street, Worcester, Worcestershire (NGR SO 8486 5535; WCM 101051). A demolition or levelling layer was found within the present upstanding 18th century building on the site. This layer dated to the 17th century and had several brick walls and floors cut in to and laid on top of it, which post-date it and are possibly contemporary with the present upstanding structure. To the rear of the building the groundworks revealed the footings of the building to be laid within a dark garden soil. Outside and to the rear of the building a series of layers were revealed in section and were to be found to be cut by a rubbish pit. The pit produced artefacts dating to the mid to late 17th century, dating the layers to that date or earlier. All the features dated were from the post-medieval and modern periods.

7. **The archive**

The archive consists of:

9	Fieldwork progress records AS2
2	Photographic records AS3
1	Colour transparency film
1	Black and white photographic films
1	Trench record sheet AS41
3	Scale drawings
1	Box of finds (not retained)
1	Computer disk

The project archive is intended to be placed at:

Worcester City Museum
Foregate Street
Worcester

8. **Acknowledgements**

The Service would like to thank the following for their kind assistance in the successful conclusion of this project, Kingsway English Centre, Nick Joyce Architects and James Dinn.

9. **Personnel**

The fieldwork and report preparation was led by James Goad. The project manager responsible for the quality of the project was Simon Woodiwiss. Fieldwork was undertaken by James Goad and Darren Miller, finds analysis by Erica Darch, and illustration by Carolyn Hunt.

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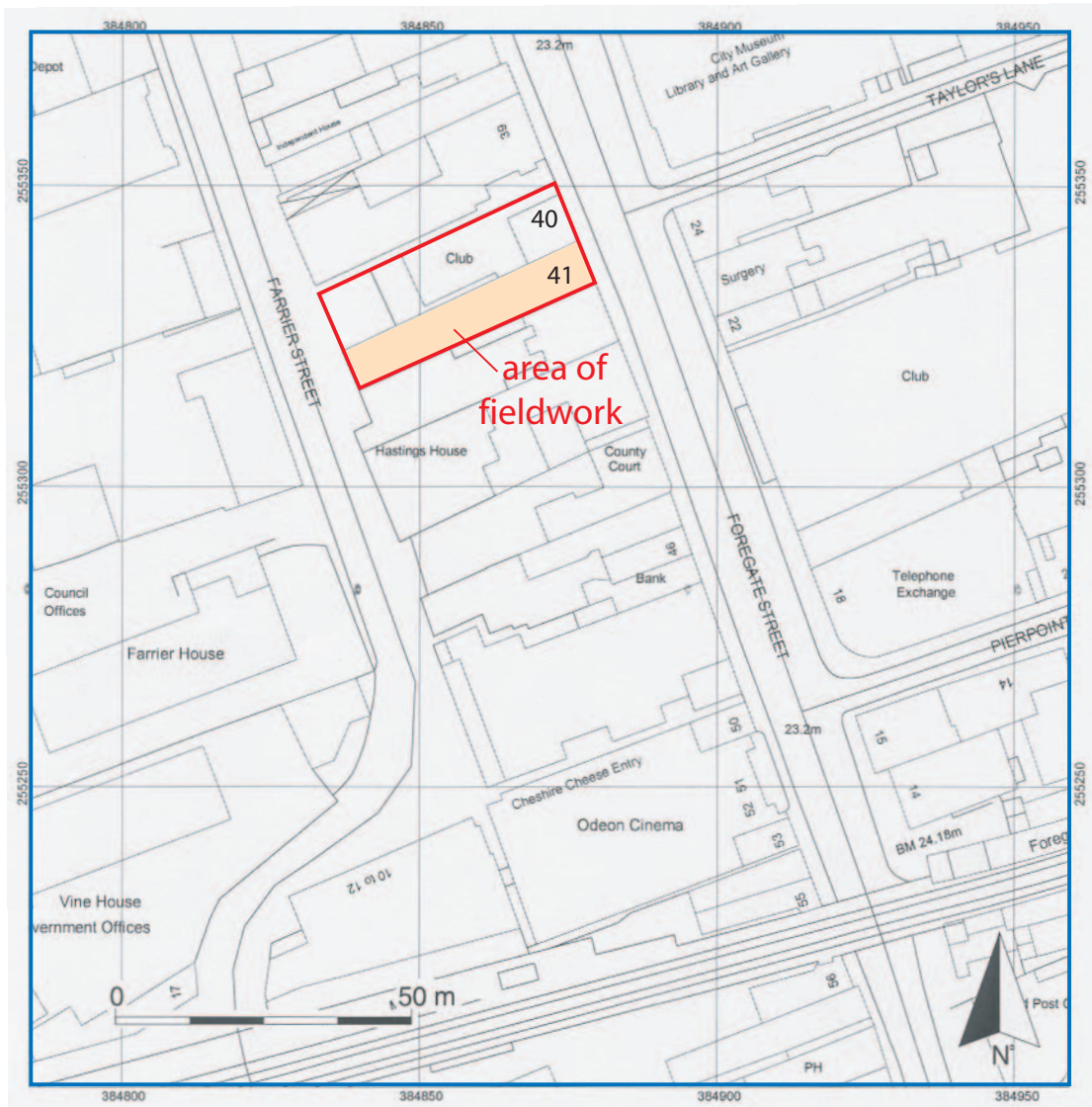
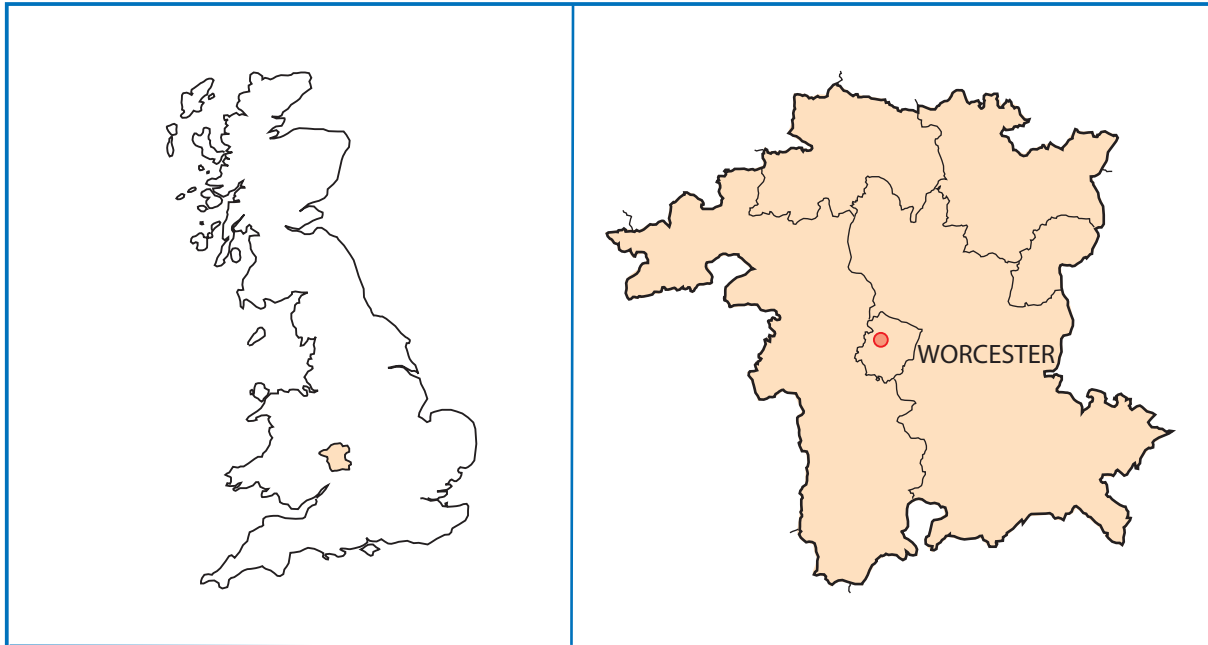
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11. Abbreviations

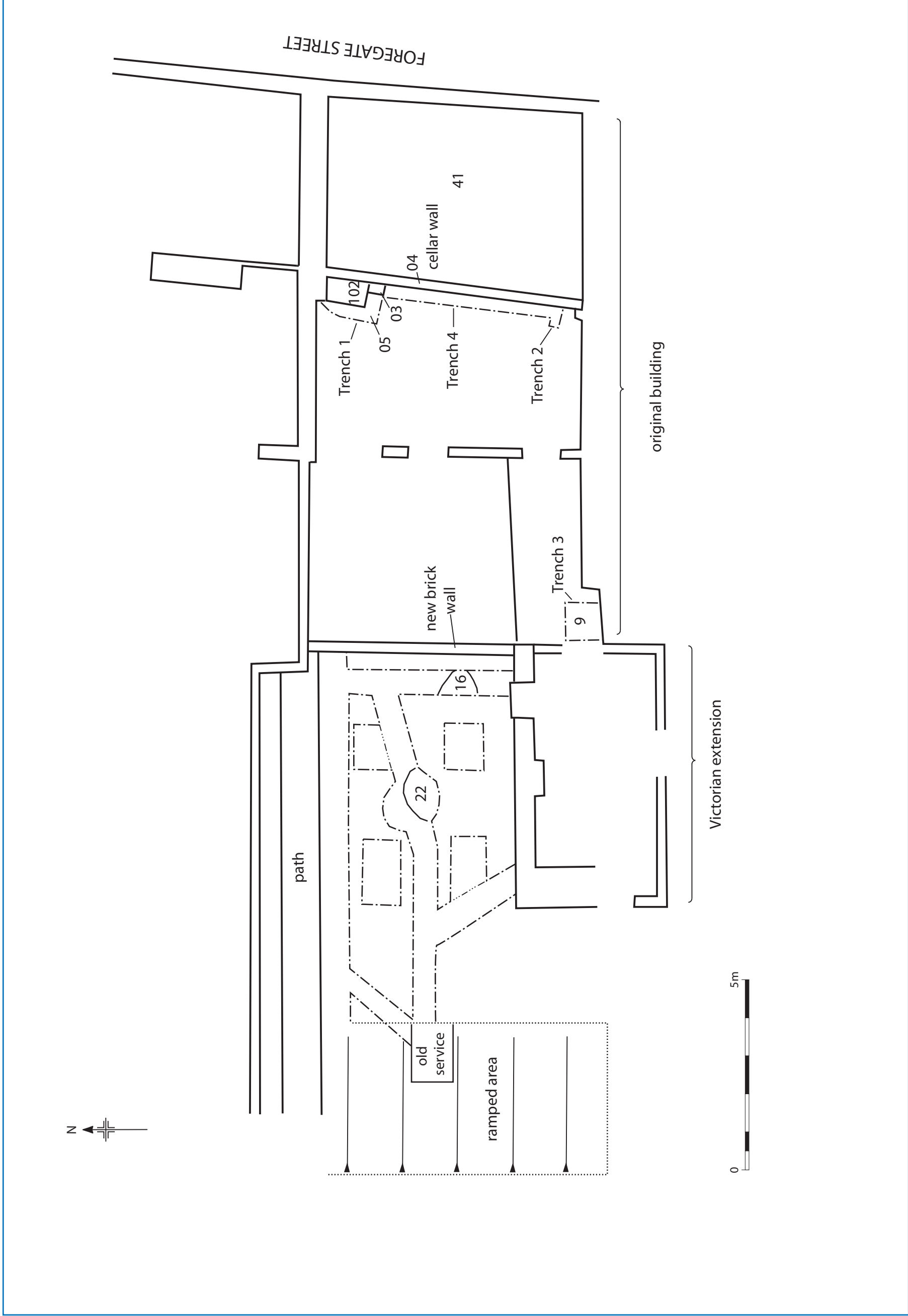
BSB	Break of slope to the base
BST	Break of slope from the top
SMR	Sites and Monuments Record.
WCMAS	Worcester City Museum Archaeology Section
WCM	Worcester City Monuments record number.



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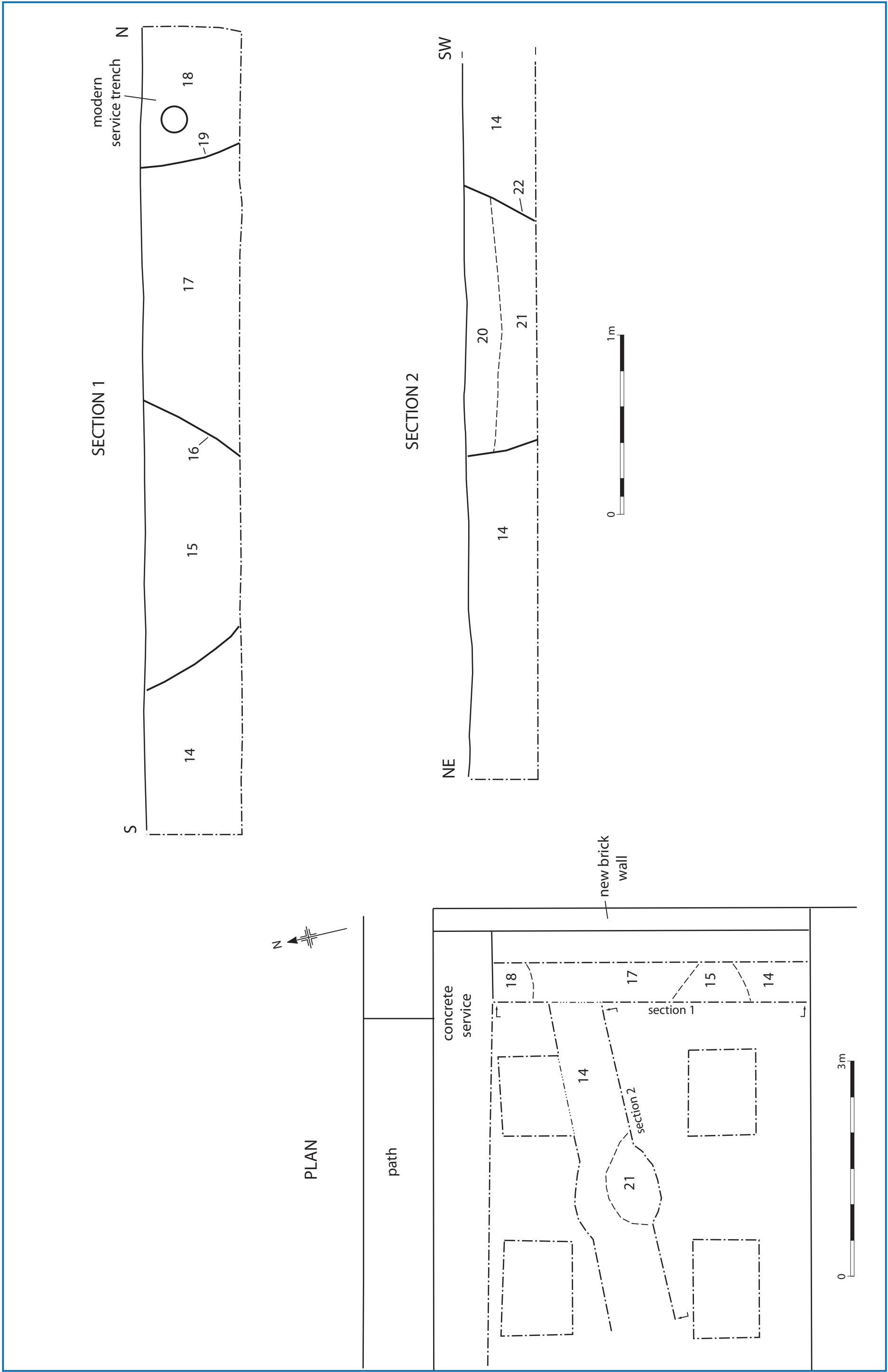
Location of the fieldwork.

Figure 1



Location of groundworks (based on a drawing by Nick Joyce Architect, drg. no. 619/117).

Figure 2



Location plan and sections 1 and 2.

Figure 3



Extract from Valentine Green's map, 1795.

Figure 4



Figure 5

Extract from George Young's map, 1795.



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0 50m

Extract from 1st edition Ordnance Survey map, 1887.

Figure 6



Plate 1: Possible flue in Trench 2



Plate 2: Wall (6) in Trench 2.



Plate 3: Trench 3 showing footings for building on top of layer 9.



Plate 4: Trench ,4 looking west.



Plate 5: Area of groundworks, looking east.

Appendix 1 Trench descriptions

Trench 1

Maximum dimensions: Length: 1.50m Width: 0.78m Depth: 0.50m

Orientation: N-S

Main deposit description

Context	Classification	Description	Depth below ground surface (b.g.s) – top and bottom of deposits
1	Excavation number		0-0.50m
2	Brick feature	1 x 0.50m brick feature, possibly a flue. Composed mainly of bricks but with a mortar covering on top.	
3	Brick wall	A short length visible under brick flue feature (2). Brick size: Length 220mm x Width 110mm x Depth 62mm. Part of a wall running east-west	0.40m -
4	Brick wall of cellar	Trenches 1 and 4 backed on to this wall. Cellar might be 19 th century in date.	
5	Layer	A light grey silty sand. Moderate rounded small stones. Moderate brick, tile and shell inclusions. Seems to be a rubbish layer cut in to by wall 3. Artefactual material dated to the 17 th century.	0 – 0.50m

Trench 2

Maximum dimensions: Length: 0.75m Width: 0.50m

Orientation: E-W

Main deposit description

Context	Classification	Description	Depth below ground surface (b.g.s.) – top and bottom of deposits
6	Wall	Part of a brick feature seen in section. Most probably a wall. Bricks measure: Length 220mm x Width 100mm x 60mm. Trench 4 section reveals them running in an east-west direction.	0 – 0.20m
7	Layer	Sandy, very stony layer. Abundant medium sized rounded stones. Cut by wall (6).	0 – 0.60m

Trench 3

Maximum dimensions: Length: 1m Width: 1m

Main deposit descriptions

Context	Classification	Description	Depth below ground surface (b.g.s.) – top and bottom of deposits
8	Wall	Southern wall of no.41, this context revealed the footings for the upstanding building resting on top of layer 9. Lowest three courses of the foundation composed of irregularly laid, flat, roughly-shaped slab stones. Immediately on top of these was a single course of bricks laid in header form, and above these a few courses laid in an irregular pattern.	0.14 – 0.90m
9	Layer	Dark grey silty sand. Occasional medium sized rounded stones and moderate charcoal inclusions. Cut in to by wall 8.	0.30 – 1.40m
10	Brick floor	A single course of bricks visible in the trench section. Lies directly on top of layer 9. Probably contemporary with wall 8.	0.14 – 0.35m

Trench 4

Maximum dimensions: Length: 4m Width: c. 0.60m

Main deposit descriptions

Context	Classification	Description	Depth below ground surface (b.g.s.) – top and bottom of deposits
11	Wall/flooring	Two courses of brick headers, regularly laid. Purpose unclear but would seem to be too thick for a wall so is possibly a floor surface, perhaps for a corridor	0 – 0.25m

Groundworks outside and at rear of property

Main deposit descriptions

Context	Classification	Description	Depth below ground surface (b.g.s.) – top and bottom of deposits
12	Layer	Dark brown sandy material under concrete. Moderate small rounded stone inclusions. Mortar fragments and some modern debris also present	
13	Brick feature	Isolated brick feature composed of six visible bricks. Possibly the base of a brick column for an overhead structure. Predates the modern concrete layer laid down over it.	
14	Layer, predating pit 16	A mid brown silty sand. Seemed to be a very homogenous layer and widespread across the site. Abundant small to medium sized rounded stones. Layer seemed very sterile with no finds or anything remotely organic within it. Cut by pits 16 and 22.	0m -
15	Fill of pit 16	Mid grey silty sand. Moderate charcoal inclusions and occasional moderate to rounded stones. Finds predominantly dating to the 17 th century.	
16	Pit, filled by 15. Cuts layers 14 and 17	BST-Sharp Sides-Concave	0m -

		BSB-Unknown Base-Unknown	
17	Layer, cut by pit 16 and modern service trench 19	Orange sandy layer with moderate rounded stone inclusions	0m -
18	Fill of modern service 19	Dark grey silty sand	
19	Modern service trench, filled by 18. Cuts through layer 17		
20	Upper pit fill of pit 22	Light grey sand with modern rubbly inclusions	0 – 0.20m
21	Lower pit fill of pit 22	Mid-brown silty sand with occasional rubble inclusions	0.20m -
22	Pit cut, filled by contexts 21 and 22	BST-Sharp Sides-Concave BSB-Unknown Base-Unknown	