

ARCHAEOLOGICAL
EVALUATION
AT
HALL GREEN WORKS,
WEST BROMWICH

Fiona Keith-Lucas

with contributions by Dennis Williams and Elizabeth Pearson

Illustrations by Carolyn Hunt

2nd July 2010

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

Project 3496
Report 1769
WMJHLCL 10

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Archaeological Evaluation at Hall Green Works, West Bromwich, Metropolitan Borough of Sandwell.

Fiona Keith-Lucas

With contributions by Dennis Williams and Liz Pearson

Part 1 Project summary

An archaeological evaluation was undertaken at Hall Green Works, West Bromwich, Metropolitan Borough of Sandwell (NGR SP 007943) on behalf of Bowles Whittick Young. A planning application has been submitted for the extension of the J.H. Lavender & Co. Ltd. foundry works to the east of the current building, and for the provision of further car parking to the south.

This evaluation was undertaken to assess the significance of archaeological remains in the development area, and the potential impact of the proposed development on any identified heritage asset.

Two evaluation trenches were opened; Trench 1 by the access road to the south of the current foundry; Trench 2 to the northeast of the foundry on rising ground to a disused building.

Natural sand was exposed in both trenches; highest in Trench 2 (to the north of the site) at 138.58m AOD, sloping down to 137.54m AOD in Trench 1 to the south. This was covered in Trench 1 by an undated subsoil, whilst Trench 2 had been subject to too much truncation for any such deposit to remain. Two ditches in Trench 1 were seen to run NW-SE; parallel to a brick wall with stone foundation seen to the east of the trench. This is thought to be a Georgian brick rebuild of an earlier, probably timber-framed, wall. Subsequent activity in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries left much of both trenches horizontally truncated. Trench 1 was partially reduced in level, perhaps in the early nineteenth century. A rough cobbled yard area and post pads, possible evidence for a barn or similar building, remained here from this time. In the twentieth century, an outside toilet was built against the earlier brick wall, supporting the map evidence that the building was still standing. Trench 2 showed evidence of heavy truncation and terracing, probably in the early twentieth century.

Part 2 Detailed report

1. Background

1.1 Reasons for the project

An archaeological evaluation was undertaken at Hall Green Works (NGR SP007944), West Bromwich, Sandwell MBC (Fig 1), on behalf of Bowles Whittick Young, who have proposed the extension of the J.H. Lavender & Co. Ltd. Foundry. The planning application (submitted to Sandwell Metropolitan Borough Council, reference DC/10/51786) is to extend the current foundry to the northeast, and provide further car parking to the south.

The proposed development site lies close to a known historic asset, the 13th Century West Bromwich Manor House (SMR 1260) and in an area thought likely to have been settled in the medieval period.

1.2 Project parameters

The project conforms to the *Standard and guidance for archaeological field evaluation* (IfA 2008). The project also conforms to a brief prepared by Graham Eyre-Morgan (*Archaeological Evaluation, J.H. Lavenders and Co Ltd, Crankhall Lane, West Bromwich, Sandwell MBC, 2010*); for which a project proposal, including detailed specification, was produced (*Written Scheme of Investigation for an archaeological evaluation at J.H. Lavender & Co Ltd, Hall Green Works, Crankhall Lane, HEAS, 2010*).

1.3 Aims

The aims of this archaeological evaluation are:

- to describe and assess the significance of the heritage asset with archaeological interest;
- to establish the nature, importance and extent of the archaeological site;
- to assess the impact of the application on the archaeological site;
- to provide further information on the origins and development of West Bromwich.

2. Methods

2.1 Documentary search

Prior to fieldwork commencing a search was made of the Historic Environment Record (HER). In addition to the sources listed in the bibliography the following were also consulted:

- Yates' Map of Staffordshire, 1775.
- Plan of West Bromwich by John Wood, 1837.
- First edition Ordnance Survey, County Series, 1890. (also 2nd to 5th editions).
- Listed Buildings records

2.2 **Fieldwork methodology**

2.2.1 **Fieldwork strategy**

A detailed specification for the archaeological works was prepared by the Service (HEAS 2010). Fieldwork was undertaken between 05.05.2010 and 07.05.2010, under the site reference number P3496, and site code WMJHLCL10.

Two trenches, amounting to c.50m² in area, were excavated over the site area of 0.9ha, representing a sample of 0.55%. Trench 1 was found to be more than 1m deep so the sides of the trench were stepped as a safety precaution. Trench 2 was adapted in shape from the proposal. This was due to the area having been highly truncated in modern times, leaving only a triangular parcel of upstanding ground. The location of the trenches is indicated in Figure 2.

Deposits considered not to be significant were removed using a CAT mechanical excavator, employing a toothless bucket and under archaeological supervision. Subsequent excavation was undertaken by hand. Clean surfaces were inspected and selected deposits were excavated to retrieve artefactual material and environmental samples, as well as to determine their nature. Deposits were recorded according to standard Service practice (CAS 1995). On completion of excavation, trenches were reinstated by replacing the excavated material.

2.2.2 **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.

2.3 **Artefact methodology, by Dennis Williams**

2.3.1 **Artefact recovery policy**

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

2.3.2 **Method of analysis**

All hand-retrieved finds were examined and a primary record made on a Microsoft Access 2000 database. They were identified, quantified and dated to period, and a *terminus post quem* date produced for each stratified context. These dates were used as a means of determining the broad chronology of the site.

The pottery and ceramic building materials were examined under ×20 magnification and recorded by fabric type according to the reference series maintained by the service (Hurst and Rees 1992; WHEAS 2009).

2.4 **Environmental archaeology methodology, by Elizabeth Pearson**

2.4.1 **Sampling policy**

The environmental sampling strategy conformed to standard Service practice (CAS 1995, appendix 4). Large animal bone was hand-collected during excavation. One sample of 20 litres was taken from fill (012) of an undated ditch [013].

2.4.2 **Method of analysis**

2.4.2.1 Macrofossil analysis

The sample was processed by flotation using a Siraf tank. The flot was collected on a 300µm sieve and the residue retained on a 1mm mesh. This allows for the recovery of items such as small animal bones, molluscs and seeds.

The residue was scanned to determine if pottery remains could be recovered to date the deposit. As no pottery was found no further scanning was carried out, although abundant charcoal/clinker was noted. The flot was part scanned using a low power MEIJI stereo light microscope.

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**

The site lies on Carboniferous Middle Coal Measures overlain by Boulder Clays (Geological Survey of England and Wales 1924).

The junction of Crankhall Lane and Hall Green Road was marked, until the mid nineteenth century, by a triangular medieval green; Hall Green. Part of this now lies within the southern area of the study site. Hall Green gained its name from the thirteenth century moated manor house; West Bromwich Hall, which lies just opposite the study site to the west. This Grade I listed building (no. 219300) now stands with additions and later ancillary buildings including the seventeenth century manager's house (Grade II listed; no. 219301). Yates' map of 1775 shows buildings on the northern edge of the medieval green. Hall Green House was built here in around 1800. This brick building is now listed as Grade II (no. 219302) and stands derelict within the grounds of J.H. Lavender's factory.

No archaeological sites have been excavated in the vicinity; however a similar evaluation was undertaken simultaneously to this, immediately to the south of the road junction with negative results.

4. **Results**

4.1 **Structural analysis**

The trenches and features recorded are shown in Figures 2 - 4. The results of the structural analysis are presented in Appendix 1.

4.1.1 **Phase 1: Natural deposits**

Natural sand was found in both trenches; being a loose, dark yellow, coarse grained sand with occasional rounded flint pebbles and cobbles. In Trench 1, as (004), it was found to slope down from east to west; from 138.12m AOD to 137.44m AOD, whilst in Trench 2 the sand (037) was seen at 138.58m AOD.

4.1.2 **Phase 2: Undated deposits**

Trench 1 was found to have a layer of subsoil (003) and (026), up to 0.14m thick. This pale, greyish brown sand-rich deposit had a higher proportion of flint gravel than the underlying

natural sand. It had been removed across most of the 20m trench by horizontal truncation during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Similarly, in Trench 2, any equivalent deposit was seen to have been truncated away during the twentieth century.

Two NW-SE ditches; [013] and [030] were seen towards the eastern end of Trench 1. Ditch [030] was seen only in section. It was 0.75m wide and 0.30m deep forming a wide 'V' profile with curved base. It would, however, originally have cut from higher; the upper reaches having been truncated. An estimate would put the original depth at 0.63m, if cutting from the top of the subsoil. Ditch [013] was similar in profile, cutting some 0.18m deeper to 137.37m AOD. It was seen to cut through the aforementioned subsoil. Neither ditch was found to contain any datable material, although a sample was taken from ditch [013] for potential finds recovery and dating. The stratigraphic relationship between the two intercutting features was unfortunately uncertain. Both ditches were filled with a homogenous silty sand. The fill of ditch [030] was slightly paler and more orange than the mid brown of [013], which may suggest that it is earlier, being closer in character to the natural.

Truncating the eastern extreme of ditch [030] was a possible tree throw or animal burrow [028]. Seen in section, the fill of this feature was very loose and with abundant tree roots and rounded flint pebbles. Once again, no dating was found from this feature which was 0.72m wide and 0.24m deep. Having not been seen in plan, the interpretation remains speculative; the fill suggested disturbance rather than infilling, but the profile was similar to the preceding ditches. The feature was not identified in the northwest facing section of the Trench, but little was discernable in this section.

4.1.3 **Phase 3: Early post-medieval**

To the far east of Trench 1, a brick wall with stone foundation (023) was seen to run NW-SE. The construction cut [025] was 0.25m deep, cutting through the subsoil (026). It had a flat base and was filled predominantly with roughly squared green sandstone blocks, up to 250mm in diameter, although quartz and flint nodules were also incorporated. The central core of this material was bonded with a mottled pink lime mortar, while the peripheries were filled with (024); a greenish grey silty sand with occasional charcoal and mortar flecks. The wall (023) was stretcher built, utilising 2 types of brick; 2" unfrogged bricks probably from the C17th, and distinctive bricks as found in Hall Green House; c.1800. The wall was also bonded with mottled pink lime mortar.

The construction cut for wall (023) was sealed by (022); a thin layer (0.10m thick) of mid greyish brown silty sand with moderate fine flecks of mortar and occasional charcoal.

4.1.4 **Phase 4: Nineteenth Century**

Much of the central section of Trench 1 had been horizontally truncated by a wide, flat based cut; [014]. This ground reduction had removed the natural soil horizons, including the contemporary topsoil (002), across a 12m length. A rough cobbled surface (009) was laid on its base at 137.47m AOD; very close to the 137.44m AOD level of the natural to the west of the trench, but cutting significantly down through the higher ground to the east. The cobbles were patchy and mixed with soft pale orange mortar in places.

Towards the western end of Trench 1 were a cluster of small features; [006], [008] and [016], which appeared to be cut from the reduced level of [014] (rather than being truncated by it). [006] was a small square pit; 0.60m across, with a flat base. The loose fill contained coal and was clearly nineteenth century in date or later. Context [008] extended beyond the limit of excavation but appeared to be square in plan; 0.45m across. It was 0.25m deep with a flat base. The fill (007) was similar to that in [006] and contained a single large piece of green sandstone. Similarly, [016] contained one large, squared and level slab of green sandstone. The cut was less precise, 0.90m across (it was not seen fully in plan), and with a level base. The alignment of the edges, and of the sandstone, respected that of [008]. It is uncertain

whether all three features are associated, but it would appear that [008] and [016] represent associated post pads, which would have supported posts approximately 1m apart.

A 0.90m thick levelling deposit (017) was dumped in Trench 1 to fill the ground reducing cut [014]; thus sealing the cobbled surface. It was a very loose, dark sandy soil with occasional lenses of pink gravel-rich clay which is thought to post-date the cobbled surface by some time.

4.1.5 **Phase 5: Twentieth Century**

A large square cut [011] was seen to truncate the dark levelling layer in Trench 1. It was filled with a soft brown silty sand (010) with ceramic building material and coal inclusions, and was not fully bottomed. The cut was at least 0.60m deep, and 2.50m long; extending beyond the limit of excavation. It is thought to probably to have been a soakaway.

A brick structure (019) was found towards the east of Trench 1. It was seen to be relatively modern whilst machining open the trench so was removed and recorded only in section. Nevertheless, it was seen to be roughly square in plan with a brick floor resting at 138.05m and 138.12m AOD; it had a shallow step down to the west. It was approximately 1.5m wide by 2.15m long, and had been built externally against the standing remains of wall (023). It had been painted internally. The construction cut [020] respected the line of wall (023), cutting below its foundations such that the floor was level with the base of the wall. From the deposits on the other side of (023), this is suggested to have been below ground level. Immediately to the west of this brick structure was a stoneware drain set within a dark grey ash-rich sandy material. This, and a small 3-course brick structure were all assigned as (018) and interpreted as one phase of drain building; the brickwork seen in section probably indicating the position of a downpipe. The brick structure and drains are thought to be associated; probably forming a lavatory.

Internally to wall (023), twentieth century material had been dumped to a thickness of 0.30m. This rubble deposit (021), which included fragments of painted wall tile, was laid level and supported a floor of machined quarry tiles, resting at 138.55m AOD; 0.11m above the concrete slab with which it is thought to have been contemporary.

In Trench 2, a cut [036] was seen to run N-S. It had been horizontally truncated, so its original depth is unknown, and it had also been truncated by the construction of a concrete ramped path to the SW. All that remained was one side, with no base, angling down from east to west at around 25°, from 138.22m AOD. If interpreted as one side of a ditch, the feature would originally have been at least 3m wide. The unconsolidated fill (035) was only marginally more grey and silty than the natural sand (037) and did not have the feel of a naturally deposited material. The interface, however, was sharp; indicating a cut rather than perhaps the interface between natural and subsoil on steeply sloping ground. It is thought that this area was subject to terracing, and that the fill (035) is redeposited natural.

The whole of Trench 2 was later horizontally truncated by cut [039] to a level of between 138.35 and 138.68 m AOD. It is thought that a stoneware drain (033) was laid at this point; in a N-S cut [034] that extended beyond the limits of excavation. As in Trench 1, the entirety was then sealed with a dark sandy deposit (038) that had the same distinctive horizon of gravel in pink clay directly on top of the natural sand.

4.1.6 **Phase 6: Modern deposits**

The central area of Trench 1 was sealed by a reinforced concrete slab resting at 138.44m AOD. This was recorded as (001); a generic number given to the modern deposits that sealed the archaeology in Trench 1. Topsoil-like material had been dumped on top of the concrete slab, the brick walls and the tile floor, to a maximum depth of 0.46m. It is thought that this landscaping took place when the current road was built, in the late twentieth century. The

road itself rose gently from 138.10m AOD, eastwards to 138.58m AOD, with a construction cut 0.31m deep.

The entirety of Trench 2 was also sealed with topsoil-like material (031). This was 0.20m thick and contained fragments of tarmac and other such modern inclusions which suggest it to have been brought in from elsewhere for landscaping. A tree throw seen during excavation was known to be modern; originating from a young sycamore removed some minutes earlier.

4.2 Artefact analysis, by Dennis Williams

The small assemblage recovered by excavation is summarised in Table 1. The finds mainly comprised pottery and ceramic building materials. The standard of preservation was generally very good. A single piece of bovine bone was also recorded, but is not included in Table 1.

Material class	Period	Count	Weight (g)
Ceramic	Late medieval/ early post-medieval	1	3206
Ceramic	Post-medieval	13	480
Ceramic	Undated	1	38
Fuel waste	Undated	1	8
Totals:		17	3766

Table 1: Quantification of the assemblage.

4.2.1 Pottery

Pottery sherds were grouped and quantified according to fabric type, as shown in Table 2. There were no diagnostic form sherds that could provide precise dating evidence, but all sherds were datable by fabric type to general production spans.

Period	Fabric code	Fabric common name	Count	Weight (g)
Post-medieval	78	Post-medieval red wares	8	122
Post-medieval	84	Creamware	2	4
Totals:			10	126

Table 2: Quantification of the pottery by period and fabric-type.

Sherds of post-medieval red wares (fabric 78) were recovered from contexts 5, 9 and 35, and could have dated from a wide 17th-19th century date range. All but one of these sherds bore black or dark brown glazes (usually on the internal surfaces). A thick, clubbed rim, found in context 9, was typical of a large bowl or pancheon, while a plain, rounded rim, from context 35, was part of a thin-walled bowl, probably used as tableware.

Two small sherds of creamware (fabric 84), probably from the same vessel, were recovered from context 9. These were likely to date from 1760-1820, though much later production could not be ruled out, owing to the lack of diagnostic form features.

4.2.2 Other artefacts

Tile

Three fragments of flat roof tile were found in context 5. Two were from a single, nibbed tile with a fabric fired from poorly-mixed brown and buff clays. The remaining fragment had an orange-brown, sandy fabric. All were probably post-medieval, dating from the 17th to mid-19th centuries.

Brick

A complete, unfrosted brick (with lime mortar attached) was recovered from context 23. Its dimensions, $9\frac{5}{8}" \times 4\frac{3}{8}" \times 2"$ ($244 \times 112 \times 50\text{mm}$), did not conform to any of statute brick sizes applied from the mid-16th century onwards. However, in view of its unusually small thickness, this brick has been tentatively assigned to a late 16th to early 18th date range. A part brick, found in context 9, measured $4\frac{1}{4}$ wide by $2\frac{1}{4}$ thick ($110 \times 61\text{mm}$), and was possibly from a date range similar to that of the brick found in context 23.

Fuel ash waste

A single cinder was retrieved from context 5.

4.2.3

Overview of artefactual evidence

The very limited artefactual assemblage indicated post-medieval occupation of the site, with the possibility that brick buildings were early post-medieval, or even late medieval in date. Nevertheless, it was noted that all the pottery finds were from the 17th to 19th centuries, with no fabrics from dates early or later than this. The *terminus post quem* dates deduced for the contexts are shown in Table 3.

Context	Material class	Object Specific type	Fabric code	Count	Weight (g)	Start date	End date	<i>tpq</i> range
5	ceramic	pot	78	1	30	1600	1900	1600-1900
	ceramic	roof tile	-	3	354	1600	1900	
	fuel waste	cinder	-	1	8	-	-	
9	ceramic	brick	-	1	1454	1575	1725	1760-1900
	ceramic	pot	78	6	88	1600	1900	
	ceramic	pot	84	2	4	1760	1820	
23	ceramic	brick	-	1	3206	1575	1725	1575-1725
35	ceramic	brick	-	1	38	-	-	1600-1900
	ceramic	pot	78	1	4	1600	1900	

Table 3: Summary of context dating based on artefacts.

4.3

Environmental analysis, by Liz Pearson

One environmental sample was taken; from the fill (012) of undated ditch [013]. Only unidentifiable herbaceous plant remains (probably roots and fungal hyphae) and occasional Coleopteran (beetle) remains were recorded in the flot in association with abundant charcoal or clinker. No interpretation could be made of this deposit other than the assemblage appears to be dominated by industrial hearth waste.

One fragment cattle bone was also hand-recovered during excavation.

The residue and flot were discarded.

5. Synthesis

5.1 Medieval – early post-medieval

The earliest deposits and features in the archaeological sequence remain undated. There was an absence of any datable material from before the end of the sixteenth century, even residually, so it would be hasty to suggest an earlier date for any feature. Nevertheless, the proximity of the site to the medieval manor of West Bromwich Hall maintains the possibility that some undated features may date back to the medieval period.

The subsoil in Trench 1 appeared to be the earliest deposit on site, although its relationship to the earliest feature; [030] was lost to truncation. Any similar deposit in Trench 2 had been truncated away entirely.

It was notable that the two ditches seen towards the north-eastern end of Trench 1; [013] and [030] ran parallel to each other and also to the early NW-SE wall (023). The relationship between the two ditches was unfortunately uncertain, but their close association suggests a shared purpose. From studying the map regression, in particular John Wood's *Plan of West Bromwich*, 1837, is it thought that each ditch respectively marked the northern boundary of Hall Green; the medieval green situated at the junction of Crankhall Lane and Hall Green Road. Ditch [030] was suggested (on the basis of its fill type) as being the earlier of the two features, and as such may be the medieval boundary ditch. This would then have been superseded by the later, deeper ditch [013] that encroached slightly on the common ground. The sample taken from [013] was seen to contain industrial hearth waste, supporting the suggestion that it was post-medieval, and possibly later in date than ditch [030].

Feature [028], interpreted as a tree throw truncating ditch [030], gains nothing from further analysis. It remains possible that this was another ditch akin to [030] and [013], but it was not seen in plan, or the reverse section, and had the feel of a disturbed rather than deposited fill.

The wall (023) that ran parallel to ditches [030] and [013] is of significance. The foundation (024) was built not of brick like the superstructure, but of mixed masonry; predominantly roughly squared green sandstone blocks. The only other building in West Bromwich known to have stone foundations such as these is the thirteenth century manor house 200m to the west (*G. Eyre-Morgan, pers. comm.*). A sampled brick from the wall itself was tentatively dated to the late sixteenth to early eighteenth century, but distinctive hand made bricks the same as those used to build Hall Green House, dated c.1800 were also used. This would suggest the wall to date from c.1800 onwards, but it is thought that the foundation may be earlier in origin. This supports the prediction of post medieval structures identified in the original brief (*G. Eyre-Morgan 2010*). The wall (023) and its foundation were sealed by an occupation horizon or possible earth floor, (022).

5.2 Nineteenth Century

A large area of Trench 1 (around 12m across) was reduced in level by cut [014] probably during the early nineteenth century. The sides of this cut were broad and shallow, giving access to the rough cobbled surface (009) which was laid on the flat base. The cobbled surface was level with the top of the natural to the west of the trench; at 137.47m AOD, and cut into the rising ground to the east to provide a terraced platform. Pottery dating from 1760 to 1820 was recovered from this layer, combined with ceramic building material from 1575 to 1725. Three features were cut from this reduced level; two post pads ([008] and [016]), and a further small pit [006] which may also have been a post pad but was lacking the block of green sandstone seen in the other features. It also did not quite line-in with their orientation. [008] and [016] would have supported posts around 1m apart. The nature of these post pads, and the associated cobbled surface, was rather ramshackle and appeared to have been external. At this period, one would expect residential buildings to have solid brick

walls rather than incorporating posts, so it is thought that these supported an agricultural building such as a barn or cart shed. John Wood's Map of 1837 depicts an 'L'-shaped building here, but with no indication of its function. The levelling deposit (017) that sealed the cobbles and post pads to a depth of 0.90m indicated the disuse and demolition of this building; evident by its absence on the OS First Edition map of 1890.

5.3 **Twentieth Century**

The large square cut [011] seen to truncate the nineteenth century levelling layer in Trench 1 was interpreted as being a soakaway. This is somewhat substantiated by the subsequent construction, in the early to mid twentieth century, of a toilet (019) and drainage system (018) in close proximity, showing a continuity of function. The roughly square brick structure (019) thought to house the toilet was erected against the earlier wall (023). Internally to this wall, a thick rubble deposit raised the floor level and provided bedding for a new tile floor in the mid twentieth century.

In Trench 2, two phases of wide-scale truncation were identified. The earlier episode saw the western edge of the trench removed by cut [036]; sloping down from east to west. This is thought to have been associated with the ground reduction necessary to expand J.H. Lavender's Foundry to its current footprint in the mid twentieth century. The material (035) that "filled" this cut is thought to be redeposited natural that was dumped here; possibly to build up the ground level locally for the construction of the concrete ramped path to the SW of the trench, possibly to even out an area that was landscaped back too far. A small fragment of ceramic building material and a piece of post medieval pottery were recovered from this deposit, but they served merely to confirm that the unconsolidated and otherwise clean deposit was indeed not natural.

The whole of Trench 2 was later horizontally truncated by cut [039] to a level of between 138.35 and 138.68 m AOD. It is thought that the N-S drain (033) was laid at this point for the newly erected building now standing disused to the east of Trench 2. The trench was then sealed with a dark sandy deposit (038) that had a distinctive horizon of gravel in pink clay directly on top of the natural sand.

It is evident that the brief was correct in identifying this isolated area of higher ground (evaluated by Trench 2) as the only remnant of originally higher ground level. Unfortunately, the full profile including subsoil and topsoil did not survive the landscaping of the twentieth century, so the true level of the top of the natural sand remains unknown. It is not anticipated that the truncation removed any significant archaeology. On the 1890 OS First Edition, this area is shown as landscaped garden, and it is likely to have stood until this time as agricultural land.

5.4 **Modern**

The central area of Trench 1 was sealed by a reinforced concrete slab (001) resting at 138.44m AOD. Topsoil-like material had been dumped on top of the concrete slab, the brick walls and the tile floor, to form a grassed bank with trees and bluebells. This landscaping would have taken place when the current road was built; in the late twentieth century.

Trench 2 was also sealed with topsoil-like material (031). This was 0.20m thick and contained fragments of tarmac and other such modern inclusions which suggest it to have been brought in from elsewhere for landscaping.

5.5 **Research frameworks**

A series of seminars on the archaeology of the West Midlands region was held in 2002. Several documents were produced that highlight areas where we would benefit from further archaeological investigation. Hodder's report *The archaeology of the early post-medieval*

period 1550–1750 in Birmingham and its surroundings provides a clear and relevant framework for some of the archaeology encountered in Trench 1. Using examples including West Bromwich Manor, he identifies a period of substantial new and re-building c.1600. At this time, timber-framing was the only construction method available. During the seventeenth century however, brick became the dominant building material, and many timber frames saw subsequent rebuilding in brick. Although these patterns have been noted, it is from a limited data set.

Hodder summarises by saying that the opportunity for excavation of buildings of this period should be taken where it arises, and poses a series of questions, including;

- How extensive is the apparent new building or rebuilding in this period?
- How widespread was the use of brick in the early part of this period?
- How many buildings of this period adapt or incorporate earlier structures?

Wall (023), with its possibly earlier stone foundation (024), suggests an ideal opportunity for such research, but the information from the evaluation is limited; being only one, undated wall.

Stamper's report *The post-medieval countryside* and Welch's *Early Post-medieval Staffordshire* also identify areas of research appertaining to the archaeology seen here (since Sandwell MBC was once a part of Staffordshire, this latter report is also applicable here). They both raise questions about our knowledge of enclosure; how little archaeological evidence is known to support the phenomenon, and what the implications are of this manifestation of the onset of capitalism. The archaeology in Trench 1 may demonstrate the encroachment of privately held land onto Hall Green; gradually at first with the succession of boundary ditches, but then wholesale with the development of further (agricultural?) buildings, and the eventual expansion of the J.H. Lavender works to incorporate a fair swathe of the original green.

6. Significance

6.1 Significance of a heritage asset with archaeological interest

The aim of an archaeological evaluation is to provide the client and the planning authority (and its advisors) with sufficient information to assess the significance of a heritage asset with archaeological interest, in line with *Planning Policy Statement 5: Planning for the Historic Environment* (DCLG 2010: Policy HE6). More detailed guidance on assessing the significance of a site with archaeological interest is set out in the associated *Historic Environment Planning Practice Guide*, which advises that an on-site evaluation should establish the nature, extent, and importance of the archaeological interest in order to provide sufficient evidence for confident prediction of the impact of the proposal (DCLG/DCMS/EH 2010: Section 5, Development Management).

6.2 Assessment of significance

The evaluation has provided new evidence on a site with archaeological interest. As a result, an assessment of the significance of this site can be made in terms of the nature, importance and extent of the archaeological interest.

Nature of the archaeological interest in the site

The archaeology encountered during this evaluation was predominantly, if not exclusively, post medieval in date. There remains the possibility, however, that the earliest part of the sequence is medieval in origin. The map regression suggested the probability of structural

remains, as identified in the brief. The evaluation has confirmed the presence of these, and has helped elucidate their date and nature, but it has also posed more specific questions regarding the historic development of the site. The poor artefact assemblage and environmental preservation has left features unsatisfactorily dated.

Relative importance of the archaeological interest in the site

As outlined in the research frameworks, the southern part of this site has the potential to further our understanding of the built heritage and rural development of the area. It is not of national importance, but in an area with few surviving historic buildings, and in such close proximity to West Bromwich Manor, the evaluation has confirmed the site to be regionally significant.

Physical extent of the archaeological interest in the site

It has been confirmed through trial trenching that although higher ground has been preserved to the north of the site (as evaluated by Trench 2), it has been truncated to the extent that no archaeology survived. To the west of the trench, a concrete ramp will certainly have truncated any further archaeology. To the east, it is possible that if the foundations of the standing building are shallow / isolated, that archaeological remains might be preserved beneath the building. It is likely, however, that the horizontal truncation observed as [039] was to create a platform for this building, and that any deposits beneath the building would also have been truncated.

Trench 1 preserved archaeological remains to within 0.12m of the current ground level. Although mention has been made of wide-scale truncation here during the nineteenth century, this is itself part of the archaeological sequence, and also indicates that in nearby areas without this probably isolated truncation, that a full soil sequence is likely to be preserved. It is also worth noting that the access road to the south of Trench 1 was only 0.31m deep, so archaeological deposits are likely to still remain underneath.

6.3 **Assessment of the impact of the proposal**

The evaluation has provided information to assess the potential impact of the proposed development on the archaeological interest in the site. The extension of the foundry itself is thought to pose little threat to any archaeological asset, as it would appear that any archaeological deposits in this area have been truncated within the twentieth century. To the south of the factory however, where additional car parking is proposed, there is a significant heritage asset that would be threatened by the development. The degree of this impact depends on the formation level of the car park. If the ground level was raised to form the car park, the archaeology would remain preserved, but any intrusive ground works will potentially impact upon the archaeology; preserved to within 0.15m of the current ground level.

7. **Recommendations**

Archaeological deposits of regional significance were encountered in evaluation Trench 1. These have been discussed, above, in relation to current research frameworks for the area. It is considered that the heritage asset preserved here warrants further investigation. If the proposed works are to be intrusive, it is recommended that the area should be subject to an archaeological excavation, thus preserving the archaeology by record. These recommendations are those of the Service and may vary from those of any archaeological curator or advisor to the planning authority.

8. **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 SMR ref WMJHLCL10 was undertaken at Hall Green Works, West Bromwich, Metropolitan Borough of Sandwell (NGR SP 007943) on behalf of Bowles Whittick Young; who have proposed extensions to the J.H. Lavender & Co. Ltd. foundry.

Two evaluation trenches were opened. Natural sand was exposed in both; highest in Trench 2 (to the north of the site) at 138.58m AOD, sloping down to 137.54m AOD in Trench 1 to the south. Here, two ditches were seen to run NW-SE, possibly marking the boundary of the medieval Green. Parallel to these, a brick wall with stone foundation to the east of the trench. This is thought to be a Georgian brick rebuild of an earlier, probably timber-framed, wall. Subsequent activity in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries left much of both trenches horizontally truncated. A terrace was cut into Trench 1, probably in the early nineteenth century, and a rough cobbled yard area was laid. Post pads at this reduced level suggest a barn or similar agricultural building. In the twentieth century, an outside toilet was built against the earlier brick wall, supporting the map evidence that the building was still standing. Trench 2 showed evidence of heavy truncation and terracing, probably in the early twentieth century.

9. **Acknowledgements**

The Service would like to thank J.H. Lavender & Co. Ltd., Bowles Whittick Young, and Graham Eyre-Morgan for their kind assistance in the successful conclusion of this project.

10. **Personnel**

The fieldwork and report preparation was led by Fiona Keith-Lucas. The project manager responsible for the quality of the project was Tom Rogers. Fieldwork was undertaken by Fiona Keith-Lucas and Tim Cornah, finds analysis by Dennis Williams, environmental analysis by Liz Pearson and illustration by Carolyn Hunt.

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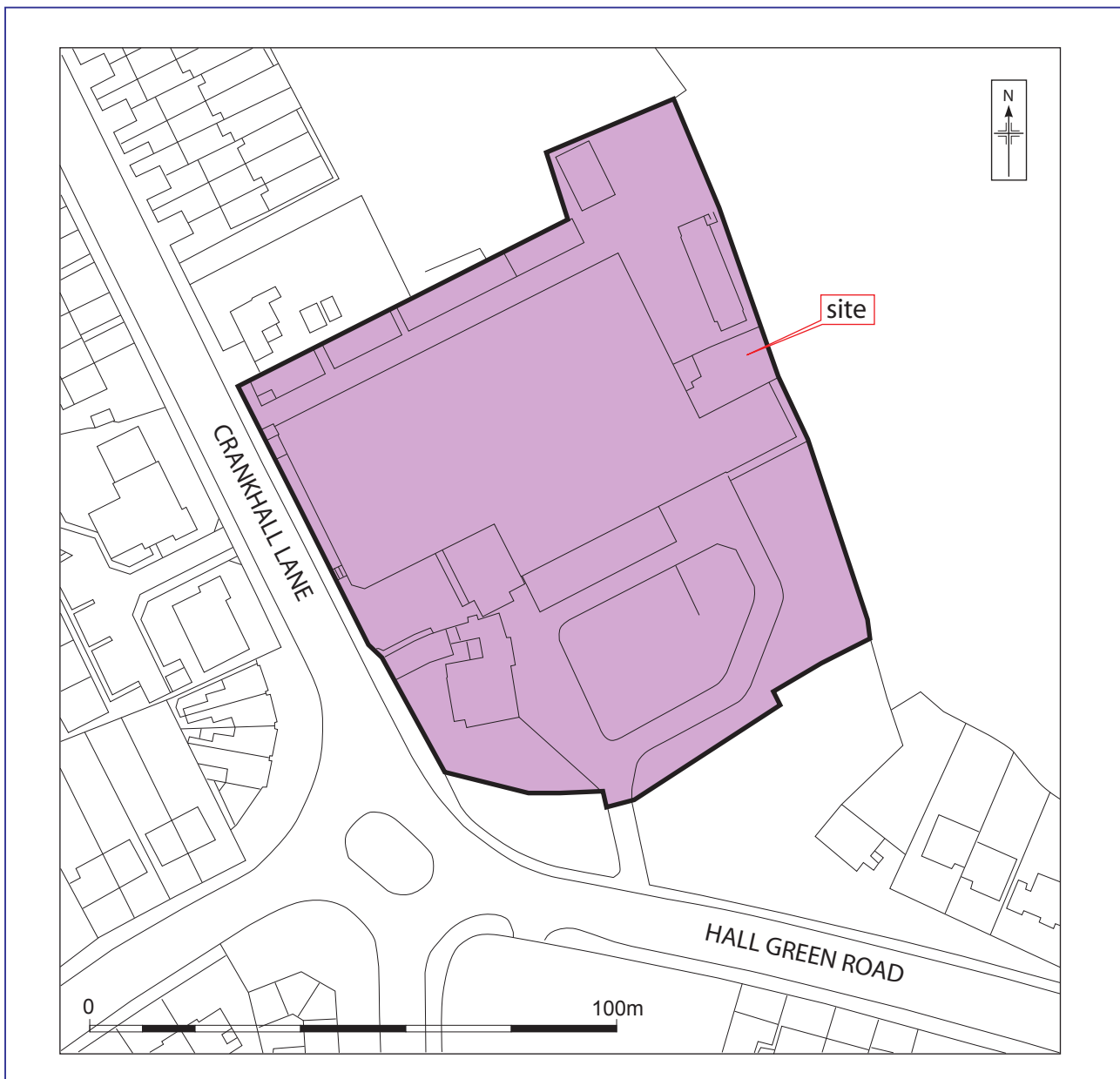
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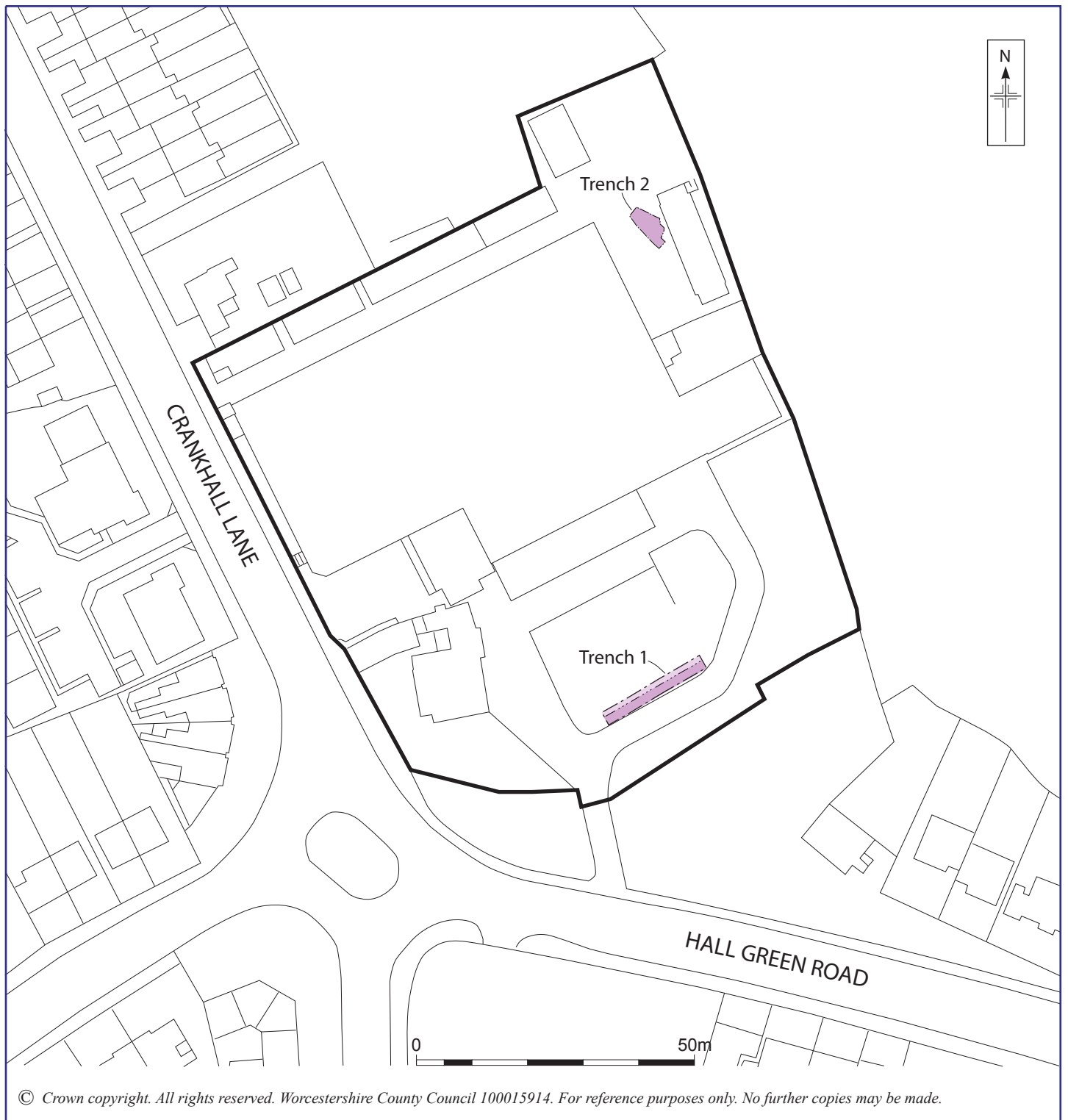
Figures



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Location of the site

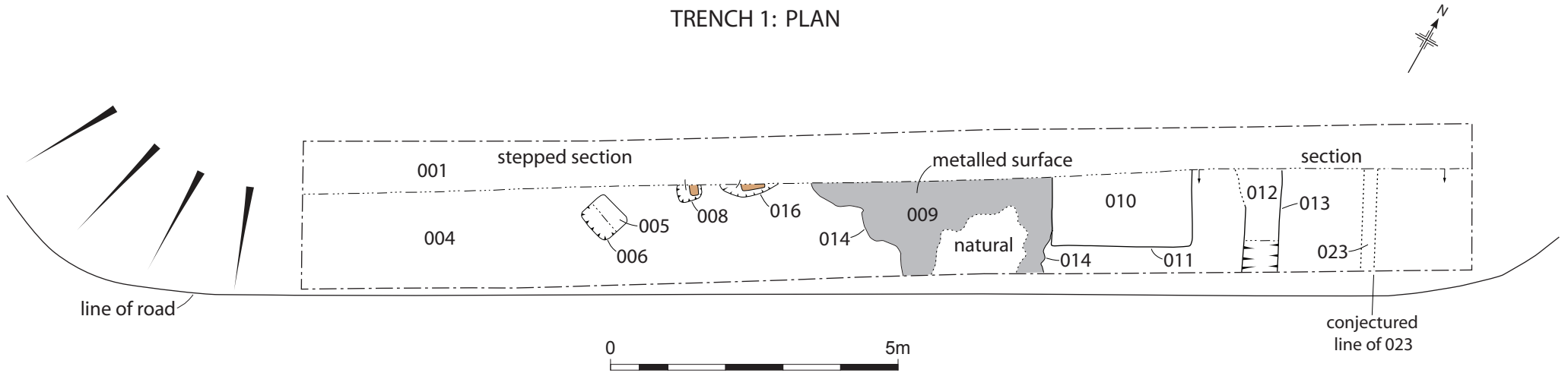
Figure 1



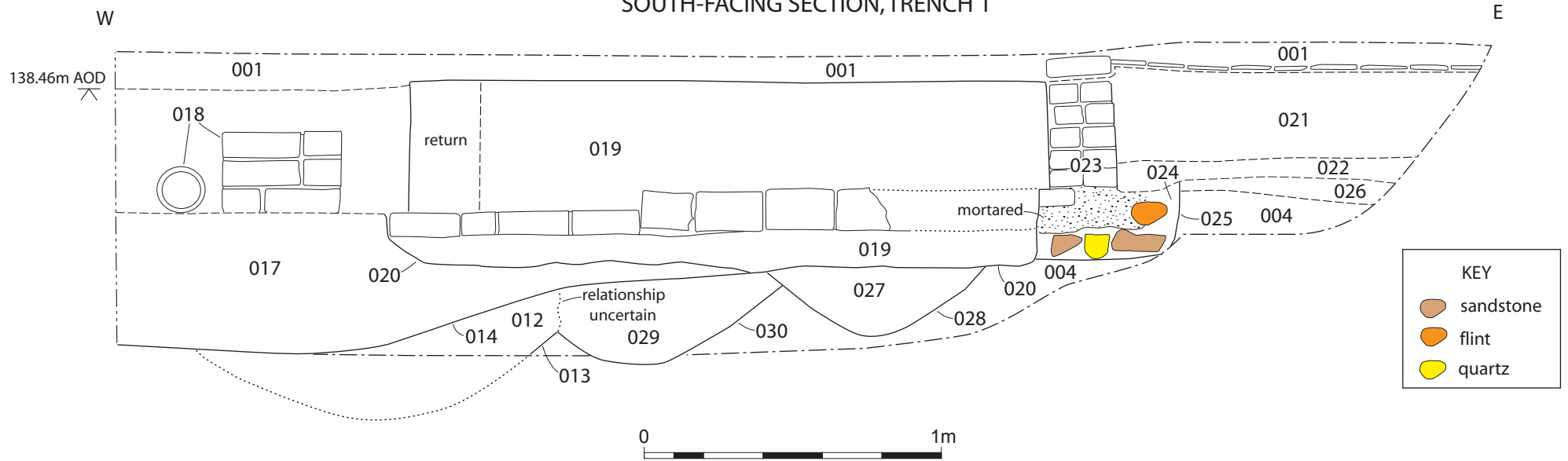
Trench location plan

Figure 2

TRENCH 1: PLAN

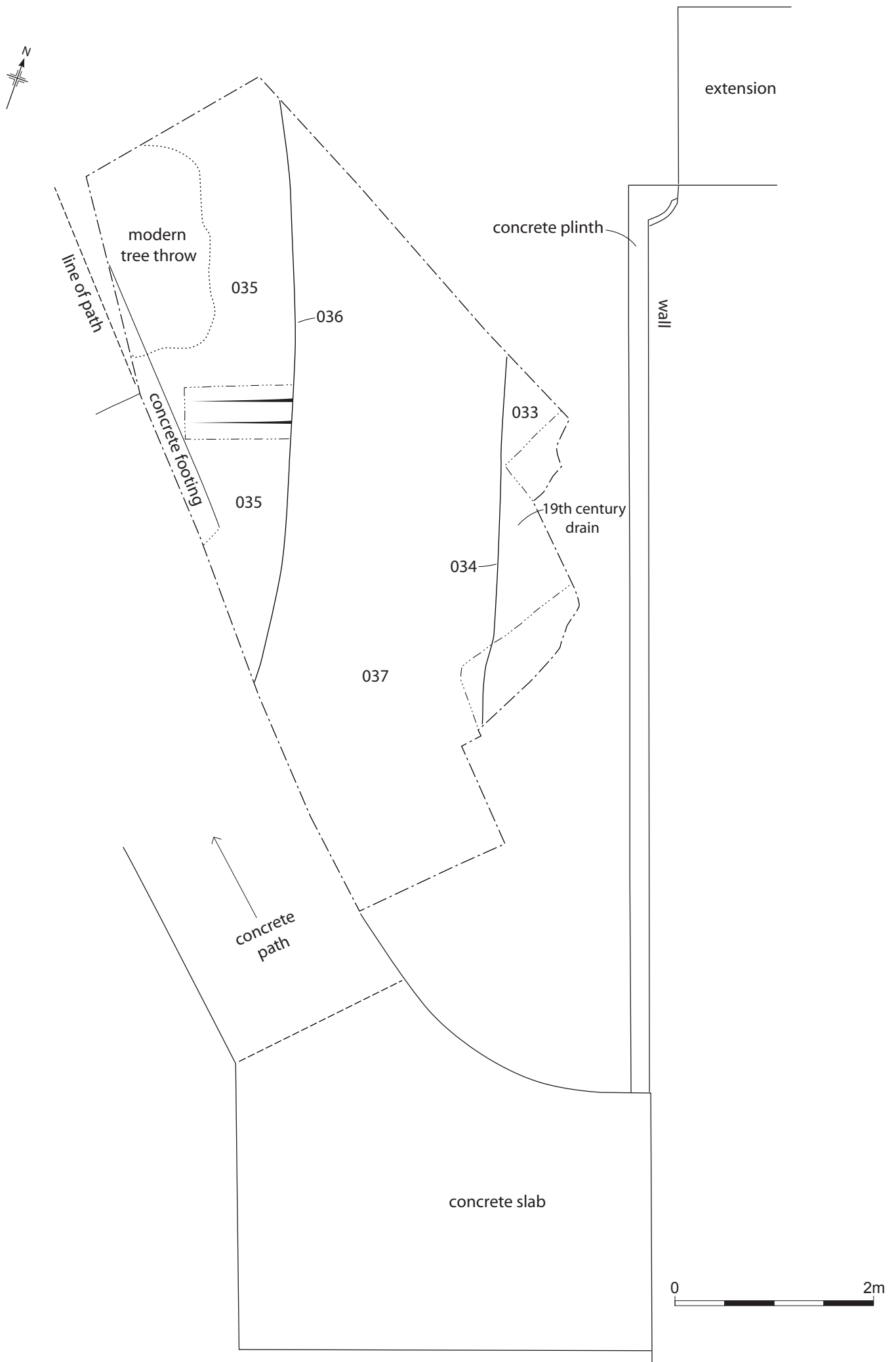


SOUTH-FACING SECTION, TRENCH 1



Trench 1 plan and section

Figure 3



Trench 2 plan

Figure 4

Plates



Plate 1: Trench 1, facing southwest



Plate 2: Ditch [013], facing northwest



Plate 3: Wall (023) on foundation (024), with added structure (019), facing north.



Plate 4: Cobbled surface (009), facing west



Plate 5: Pit [006], facing north



Plate 6: Post pads [008] and [016], facing northwest



Plate 7: Sanitation in Trench ; possible lavatory (019) and drain (018), facing north



Plate 8: Trench 1 after backfilling



Plate 9: Opening Trench 2, facing north



Plate 10: Trench 2, facing north



Plate 11: Cut [036], facing south



Plate 12: Trench 2 after backfilling

Appendix 1 Trench descriptions

Trench 1

Site area: Car park to South of Foundry.

Maximum dimensions: Length: 20.5m Width: 2.5m Depth: 0.60 – 1.54m

Orientation: NE - SW

Deposit description

Context	Classification	Description	Depth below ground surface (b.g.s) ¹ – top and bottom of deposits
001	Modern deposits	Generic number for various modern dumped layers and intrusions. Redeposited topsoil, concrete slab, road build-up.	0.00 – 0.31m Modern dumped material above 'ground level' by <0.81m
002	Layer	Topsoil. Loose, dark brownish grey silty sand. Occasional ceramic building material (cbm), coal, mortar.	0.00 – 0.46m
003	Layer	Subsoil. Loose, mid greyish brown silty sand. Moderate rounded flint gravel. =(026)	0.42 – 0.60m
004	Natural	Natural sand. Unconsolidated dark yellow sand, occasional rounded flint gravel – cobbles.	Surface 0.50 – 0.64m, thickness unknown.
005	Fill	Fill of [006]. Loose, mid greyish brown silty sand. Frequent rounded flint pebbles, occasional coal.	0.70 – 0.86m
006	Cut	Small square pit, 0.60x0.65m, flat base.	0.70 – 0.86m
007	Fill	Fill of [008], with sandstone block. Loose, light greyish brown silty sand + occ. rounded flint pebbles and coal	0.65 – 0.89m
008	Cut	Small post medieval pit/post pad. 0.30 x 0.45m, flat base	0.65 – 0.89m
009	Fill	Cobble surface in cut [014]. Rounded flint gravel to cobbles in loose dark greyish brown silty sand with pale orangey mortar patches.	0.88 – 0.95m
010	Fill	Fill of [011]. Soft, light brown silty sand. Frequent rounded flint pebbles / gravel, occasional ceramic building material (cbm) and coal fragments.	0.55 – >1.15m
011	Cut	Modern, deep, square cut. Vertical sides, not bottomed	0.55 – >1.15m
012	Fill	Fill of [013]. Loose, pale orange / greyish brown silty sand. Frequent flint gravel / pebbles	0.78 – 1.22m

¹ Actual ground level across Trench 1 varies substantially with landscaping. Ground level has been taken locally from the sloping road level; from 138.58m AOD at the east end, to 138.10m AOD to the west.

Context	Classification	Description	Depth below ground surface (b.g.s) ¹ – top and bottom of deposits
013	Cut	NW-SE ditch. Concave curved sides and base. 0.60 to 1.20m wide.	0.78 – 1.22m
014	Cut	Large terracing cut. c.12m wide, flat bottomed.	0.00 – 0.95m
015	Fill	Fill of [016] + sandstone slab. Loose, mid greyish brown silty sand with flint gravel, cbm and coal fragments.	0.70 – 0.98m
016	Cut	Cut for post pad. Extends beyond limit of excavation. Squared corners, flat base. 0.92m maximum width.	0.70 – 0.98m
017	Fill	Levelling deposit filling terrace [014]. Loose dark brownish grey silty sand. Moderate flint gravel, patches of rounded gravel in pink clay, sandy mortar, coal, cbm	0.00 – 0.90m
018	Structure	Stoneware drain and associated brickwork	0.12 – 0.55m
019	Structure	Square, floored, brick structure. 3" red brick, in rough English garden bond. Shallow step in floor, painted internally. c.1.20 x 2.10m	0.10 – 0.65m
020	Cut	Construction cut for [019]. Vertical sides, flat base, seen only in section.	0.55 – 0.77m
021	Layer	Dumped levelling layer, C20th. 70% rubble, in mortar-rich, loose, pale greyish brown silty sand matrix	0.05 – 0.40m
022	Layer	Post medieval occupation layer. Moderate, mid greyish brown silty sand with moderate flecks of mortar and charcoal. No stones seen	0.40 – 0.50m
023	Structure	Brick wall. Mix of (reused?) red brick types in stretcher bond. Runs NW-SE, rests on (024)	0.12 – 0.50m
024	Structure	Masonry foundation. Predominantly green sandstone blocks in loose, mid greyish brown silty sand. Supports (023)	0.48 – 0.75m
025	Cut	Construction cut for (024). Straight sides, flat base	0.48 – 0.75m
026	Layer	Subsoil. Loose, mid greyish brown silty sand, moderate rounded flint gravel, rare charcoal flecks.	0.45 – 0.54m
027	Fill	Fill of [028]. Very loose, mid brownish grey silty sand with high (c.40%) gravel content	0.72 – 0.96m
028	Cut	Probable tree throw. Not seen in plan, concave curved profile 0.72m wide.	0.72 – 0.96m
029	Fill	Fill of [030]. Loose, mid orangey grey-brown silty sand. Occasional flint gravel / pebbles.	0.74 – 1.04m

Context	Classification	Description	Depth below ground surface (b.g.s) ¹ – top and bottom of deposits
030	Cut	NW-SE ditch. Concave curved sides and base, 0.75m wide.	0.74 – 1.04m

Trench 2

Site area: North east of current Foundry building.

Maximum dimensions: Length: 8m Width: 2 - 4m Depth: 0.0 – 0.90m

Orientation: NW - SE

Deposit description

Context	Classification	Description	Depth below ground surface (b.g.s) ² – top and bottom of deposits
031	Modern deposits	Redeposited topsoil. Loose, dark brownish grey silty sand. Frequent industrial waste	0.00 – 0.26m
032	-	Void. (Assigned for subsoil, but none present)	-
033	Fill	Backfill of [034]. Stoneware drain in loose, dark brownish grey silty sand. Frequent inclusions, as (031)	0.47 – 0.87m
034	Cut	Drain cut. Runs N-S, greater than 1m wide, straight sides at 45°, base not seen	0.47 – 0.87m
035	Fill	Fill of [036]. Loose, pale yellowish brown sand (very slight silt content). Rare flint gravel	0.93 – 1.35m
036	Cut	Linear cut. Only one side seen, cutting at c.25° from east to west. Base not within limit of excavation	0.93 – 1.35m
037	Natural	Very loose, unconsolidated mid brownish yellow sand with c.20% rounded flint gravel / pebbles.	0.60m - Thickness unknown
038	Fill	Fill of [039]; more layer-like. Loose, dark brownish grey silty sand with horizon of compact gravel in reddish brown silty clay. Covers entire trench	0.21 – 0.71m
039	Cut	Horizontal cut truncating entirety of Trench 2; flat	0.21 – 0.71m

² Actual ground level across Trench 2 varies substantially with landscaping and truncation by concrete path. Ground level taken as a constant, from level to E of trench, at 139.15m AOD.

Appendix 2 Technical information

The archive

The archive consists of:

38	Context records AS1
3	Fieldwork progress records AS2
1	Photographic record AS3
1	Drawing record AS4
60	Digital photos
1	Sample record AS17
1	Level record sheet AS29
5	Scale drawings
1	Box of finds

The project archive is intended to be placed at:

Community history and Archives Service
Smethwick Library
High Street
Smethwick
West Midlands
B66 1AB