



Revolution Park Wednesfield Wolverhampton

Archaeological Investigations 2022

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Revolution Park, Wednesfield, Wolverhampton

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SUMMARY

A programme of archaeological evaluation and subsequent excavation was undertaken ahead of the redevelopment at Revolution Park, Wednesfield, Wolverhampton.

Trial trenching in June-July 2022 revealed limited evidence of activity from the medieval period within the north-west corner of the site, known to be the site of Merrill's Hall moated farmstead. Two parallel gullies within the supposed moated enclosure contained pottery datable to the 12th - 13th century, and 16th - 18th century deposits within the proposed area of the enclosure suggested continued, but not intensive, use through the post-medieval period. Part of the moat was exposed and was found to contain a large number of infill deposits of late 19th and early 20th century date.

Results showed that the moat may not have formed a complete circuit. The limited evidence for Merrill's Hall buildings comprised one section of brick wall corresponding to part of a late 19th century extension on north side of the hall.

The subsequent excavation in September-October 2022 targeted the site of the moat and hall in the northwest corner of the site. Further 12th - 13th and mid-13th - 14th/15th century pottery sherds were recovered, analysis of which suggests domestic activity in the area, although the pair of parallel gullies and the finds they contained remain the only evidence of this activity. Additional sections of wall from Merrill's Hall were uncovered, two of which corresponded to the known early to mid-19th century footprint of Merrill's Hall, and one to the later 19th century extension. The first known reference to Merrill's Hall dates from the 18th century and a painting of the hall shows it as a late 18th – early 19th century building and no evidence for any earlier buildings was present in either phase of the works.

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A relative lack of 15th – 17th century finds suggests a lack of intensive use between the medieval period and construction of Merrill's Hall.

The moat was further investigated and was again found to exclusively contain 19th to 20th century infill deposits containing brick rubble and debris deposited to fill the moat as part of the early 20th century industrial development of the site. No evidence was recovered to suggest the moat ever formed a complete circuit around the hall and it is possible that it was originally dug in an L-shaped plan and intended as a decorative feature.

Brick-built walls, floors and sub-floors associated with the former industrial buildings of the Weldless Steel Tube Works were recorded in the southern excavation area. The remains were part of one of the factory buildings identified during the evaluation, which identified extensive structures across the site, including the base of the main factory chimney and remains of the Bentley Canal.

The results were generally consistent with the potential for medieval, post-medieval, and modern remains to be present on the site, as highlighted in a previous Desk-Based Assessment. They have also shown that the 20th century industrial development and clearance across the site resulted in comprehensive removal and damage to the remains of Merrill's Hall and its grounds.

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1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 Planning permission has been granted by the City of Wolverhampton Council (Planning Reference: 21/00947/FUL) for the erection of four industrial units at Revolution Park, Steelpark Way, Wednesfield, Wolverhampton, WV11 3SQ, hereafter referred to as the 'site'.
- 1.2 A Desk-Based Assessment (Clarke 2021) highlighted the potential for medieval remains associated with the Merrill's Hall moated farmstead in the northwest corner of the site, also post-medieval and modern remains associated with the Weldless Steel Tube Works.
- 1.3 In June-July 2022, Archaeology Warwickshire carried out an archaeological evaluation in accordance with a Written Scheme of Investigation approved by the planning authority which revealed remains of the hall and the moat itself, as well as evidence of medieval activity in the area of the former hall (Griffiths and Page 2022). Thereafter, Archaeology Warwickshire were commissioned to excavate an area targeted in the site of the hall and moat and undertake a watching brief during the digging of a new service trench that crossed the line of the moat.
- 1.4 The excavation fieldwork was carried out between September and October 2022 and this report presents the results of that work. The project's physical archive will be curated at Archaeology Warwickshire's Hawkes Point store until such time as a more appropriate repository agrees to take it. In the immediate term, all the site records will be scanned and a digital archive uploaded to the Archaeology Data Service. Finds ownership will remain with the landowner until such time as title may be transferred in accordance with appropriate agreement.
- 1.5 The work was carried out in accordance with Chartered Institute for Archaeologists Standard and guidance for archaeological excavation

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(2020) and a Written Scheme of Investigation (Child 2022) agreed by the Archaeological Advisor to the Local Planning Authority.

The archive consists of:

	No	Type
Physical records	2	Section drawing sheets
	37	Context sheets
Digital records	172	Photographs
	2	Location plan
Artefacts	54	Pottery sherds
	3	Animal bone frags
	1	Tile
	1	Brick
	9	CBM
	4	Clay pipe
	1	Leather

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2 SITE LOCATION

- 2.1 The site is centred on National Grid Reference SO 9518 9981, on the north side of Steelpark Way, Wednesfield, in the parish of Wolverhampton (Figs 1 and 2). The site is bounded to the west by vegetation adjacent to Wednesfield Way and Steelpark Way to the south. Industrial units bound the site to the north and the TATA Steel works are to the east.
- 2.2 The British Geological Survey (BGS 2022) records the underlying bedrock geology as Unnamed Igneous Intrusion, Westphalian – Microgabbro and Pennine Lower Coal Measures Formation – Mudstone, Siltstone and Sandstone overlain by a superficial deposit of Till, Devensian – Diamicton,
- 2.3 The site gradually slopes to the south and is made up of large areas of concrete and tarmac surfaces which in places extend beyond 1m in depth.

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3 BASELINE ARCHAEOLOGICAL DATA

- 3.1 The archaeological background to the site was described by Clarke (2021) and enhanced in the evaluation report (Griffiths and Page 2022), The following assessment takes into account the wider Wednesfield and Wolverhampton environs.

Prehistoric and Roman

- 3.2 As is usual in areas subject to intensive modern development, there is little evidence for prehistoric activity around the site, even though several, possibly ancient, burial mounds are reported across the Wednesfield area (Tyler 2010a, 2-3; Tyler 2010b, 2-3; Clarke 2021, 8). Two circular features were identified from aerial photographs at Wednesfield High School, c. 450m to the north of the site, one of which was thought to be a possible Bronze Age round barrow. They were not recorded during an evaluation, possibly because they were destroyed as the area was levelled for the school playing field in the mid-20th century (Morgan 2019, 8).
- 3.3 The total absence of evidence for Roman activity in the Wednesfield area is more likely to reflect the low incidence of archaeological prospection rather than be a true reflection of the use of the area in that period.

Medieval

- 3.4 Wednesfield is first mentioned in the late 10th century as *Wodnesfeld* and *Wodnesfelde* and the name is thought to originate from Woden's *feld* or open land (Horovitz 2003, 621). The preservation of the name of the pagan god Woden in the early versions of the name is thought to indicate the name dates from the first half of the 7th century (Horovitz 2003, 38).
- 3.5 It is recorded in the Domesday Book that Wednesfield was in the Offlow Hundred under the lands of the Clergy of Wolverhampton and containing six villagers and six smallholders as well as some woodland (Tyler 2010c, 3). The settlement developed throughout the medieval period around a

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central core c. 1km to the northwest of the site. William Yates' Map of the County of Stafford produced in 1775 (not reproduced) is the earliest known mapping of the area at a scale with sufficient resolution, and it appears to show the general layout of the medieval core. It also shows a number of other small settlements around the area, including Wood End and March End, which was c. 100m north of the excavation site.

- 3.6 Merrill's Hall is first mentioned by name in the 18th century, but it has long been assumed to have been a medieval moated farmstead, based a remnant L-shaped section of moat shown on mid- to late 19th century mapping (Figs 3 and 4).
- 3.7 Some 13th-15th century cooking pot fragments recovered from gullies in an evaluation trench where the moat platform could be expected provided a tantalising glimpse into the medieval use of the site (Griffiths and Page 2022) but too little of the gullies was exposed to properly characterise them.
- 3.8 Nevertheless, Merrill's Hall is in an area where moated sites are common (see Fig 2) and 108 examples have been identified in South Staffordshire, including three in Wednesfield at Prestwood, Ashmore Park, and Moathouse (Smallshire, 1978).
- 3.9 Three moated sites are also recorded within the medieval hamlet of Nечells, 800m south of the site and further sites are implied at Newbolds, Rumbelows, Blackhalves, Long Knowle Farm and Perry Hall (Tyler 2010a, 2010b, 2010c). Moated halls and farmsteads are a particular characteristic of woodland settlement in Warwickshire and South Staffordshire in the 13th century (Rowlands 1987). However, archaeological work within these sites has been limited (Griffiths 1987; Cane 1988).

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Post-Medieval and modern

- 3.10 Large parts of south Wednesfield remained rural in character until the 19th century, when large scale industry (mainly related to coal mining and associated infrastructure such as canals and railways) began to encroach (Quigley 2009, 135-6).
- 3.11 Map regression including Yates' Map of the County of Stafford (1775, not reproduced) and the Wolverhampton Township Map (1842, also not reproduced) tell us little of the history of Merrill's Hall. Yates' map is not at an adequate scale but does suggest a building at the site, whilst in contrast moated sites like nearby Moat House, Prestwood, and Ashmore (spelled Ashmoor) are named on the map.
- 3.12 By the time of the Tithe map of 1842 (not reproduced) Merrill's Hall comprised an L-shaped building present to the north of an L-shaped body of water. The wider land parcel which became the hall grounds, moat and eastern orchard is divided in half by a field. This division is not shown on the subsequent 1st Edition Ordnance Survey map of 1886 (Fig 3), but then reappears by the 1902 OS map (Fig 4).
- 3.13 Merrill's Hall was sold in 1886 (sale catalogue held by Wolverhampton Archives & Local Studies, item ref. no. D-JSR/44/51), with the new owner seemingly developing the site with a NW-SE aligned range on the northern side of the hall (Fig 4). The new range was first shown on the Ordnance Survey map of 1902 and a short length of its south wall was recorded by the evaluation (Griffiths & Page 2022).
- 3.14 Details of the Tithe map appointments indicate that plot 375, on which Merrill's Hall stood contained "2 Houses, Barn, Stable, Garden, etc" (Staffordshire County Council 2023). The adjacent southern plot 374 was titled "moat bank", which is the first known reference to a moat, with the plot to the north (376) described as a paddock and plot 367 to the east a

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meadow. Of note is plot 366 to the east of the hall grounds and adjoining plots 376 and 367; this was pasture land described as “part of Causeway Meadow” (with the other part of the meadow lying to the south of Bentley Canal, having been split by its construction). The toponym suggests that the land may have been low-lying/wet and requiring a causeway to get across, however, deposits recorded in trench 6 of the evaluation were modern rubble overlying natural sand and clay and therefore not indicative of wetland.

- 3.15 Moreover, plot 364 which abutted Causeway Meadow to the east was arable land called “Thistly Piece” and was therefore suggestive of well-drained cultivable soils favoured by thistles if these were indeed common in this field. At the time of the Tithe, the wider area surrounding Merrill’s Hall was generally a mix of arable land and pasture intermixed with meadows.
- 3.16 The evaluation established that the moat was not rectangular in plan, as supposed from the field boundaries on the Ordnance Survey 1st edition map of 1886. Therefore, either its eastern arm was nearer to the hall, or it did not form a complete circuit as no evidence for a northern return was found.
- 3.17 The SW corner of the supposed moat is depicted on 19th and early 20th century mapping, including the Tithe (Figs 3 and 4). The evaluation revealed that the ditch had been recut at least once before being filled with large quantities of demolition rubble and backfilled during the early 20th century industrial development of the site.
- 3.18 A ditch and a former field boundary ditch within the supposed moated area contained pottery of 17th-18th century date. Pre-19th century pottery was only found within the area of the moated enclosure.

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Modern

- 3.19 In the early 20th century, the moat was filled in and the area to the south of the hall developed by the Weldless Steel Tube Company, which acquired the site to complement their adjacent Reliance Works (Black Country History 2022). By the mid-20th century, the steelworks buildings covered the whole site (Fig 5) and Merrill's Hall was being used as offices, but all the buildings had been demolished and the site cleared by the end of the 20th century. The pre-excavation layout of the site, with alternating strips of tarmac access paths and storage areas had been established by 2007.
- 3.20 The evaluation recorded evidence of a number of the former factory buildings, including the base of the main factory chimney, brick floors and yard surfaces and part of the wall of the Bentley Canal at the point it was joined by the later Neachells Branch Canal.

4 AIMS AND METHODS

- 4.1 The main aim of the work was to expose and record any significant archaeological deposits revealed by the development, to collate the fieldwork records into an archaeological archive and present the results of the fieldwork for dissemination.
- 4.2 The research aims in the WSI were:-
- Is it a moat?
 - When was it created?
 - To establish the presence and nature of any medieval remains
 - Does any evidence survive of Merrill's Hall?
 - Is it possible to date the establishment of the hall?
- 4.3 This report will describe and discuss the extent, character and dates of all archaeological remains exposed and place the results in their local and regional contexts whilst tying into regional research themes set out in *The Archaeology of the West Midlands: A framework for research* (Watt 2011) and *The Black Country Core Strategy* (2011) where warranted.
- 4.4 The work undertaken also involved the examination of early map evidence as well as records of archaeological remains in the area and local historical journals and other publications.
- 4.5 The excavation area covered c. 2,120 square metres of concrete and tarmac surfaces; where possible this and any demonstrably modern overburden were removed by machine using a breaker and toothless bucket under direct archaeological supervision. Ground reduction then continued in shallow spits until the uppermost archaeological horizon, or the geological natural was reached (Fig 6: Photo 1). Care was taken to uncover and record 20th century industrial remains, meaning that in places the stripping of site was undertaken in two phases.

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- 4.6 During the initial ground clearance it became apparent that the eastern portion of the site was covered by a 1m thick reinforced concrete slab, impossible to remove in the course of the commissioned excavation. Therefore, it was agreed with the planning archaeologist that a watching brief would be maintained during its removal during the remediation works across the site. In the event, it was decided by the main site contractor that the formation levels required in this part of the site did not exceed the depth of archaeology and therefore the large slab was not to be removed. The watching brief was therefore confined to small areas of the site and the excavation of a new service trench.
- 4.7 An experienced archaeologist was present for each period of ground disturbance when notified by the client's contractor in accordance with the WSI, which included the excavation of the new service trench through the eastern edge of the site. This revealed the southern edge of the moat, but any other archaeological remains that may have been present had been removed or heavily disturbed by previous works.

5 THE EXCAVATED EVIDENCE

- 5.1 Geological natural yellowish red clay was recorded between 0.45m and 1.2m below existing ground level, or between 131.98m and 132.62m above Ordnance Datum (aOD).

Medieval gully 012 and post-medieval Gully 014

- 5.2 Parallel gullies 012 and 014 were aligned WNW-ESE through the centre of the stripped area and had previously been recorded in Trench 1 (109 and 113 respectively) during the evaluation (Figs 7 and 8, section B; Photo 2). Both gullies continued eastwards from the evaluation trench, below a modern drain/service until they were truncated by other modern structures. The eastern sections, beyond the drain/service, of were recorded as 045 for gully 012 and 061 for gully 014. Section 061 could only be exposed in plan for a short distance due to the proximity of a modern manhole that made excavation impossible (Fig 8; Photo 3).
- 5.3 The southern of the two, gully 012=045 was steep-sided with a flat base, 0.63m wide by 0.25m deep, and was filled with a single deposit of dark grey silty clay (013=046). Excavation of this deposit yielded a total of 26 pottery sherds, including sherds belonging to two coarse gritty cooking pots dating to the 12th - 13th century, and sherds of a mid-13th to 14/15th century pipkin. Two fragments of animal bone from a large mammal were also recovered.
- 5.4 Gully 014 was 0.6m wide by 0.18m deep with a rounded profile and also filled with dark grey silty clay (015) and contained ten sherds of 13th – 14th century pottery, some of which conjoined with sherds from gully 012, a sherd of post-medieval pottery and two pieces of bone from a medium-sized animal were also recovered.
- 5.5 A sample taken from the fill (013) of gully 012 contained low levels of charcoal, grass seed and uncharred buttercup and bramble seeds.

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Whereas sample from the fill (015) of gully 014 contained high levels of charcoal with low levels of charred grains, as well as coal/slag/clinker and wood. The nature of this material and the presence of the post-medieval pot sherd suggests a later date for gully 014, with the medieval pottery residual within the fill.

- 5.6 This suggests that gully 014 was a possible replacement for gully 012.

Post-medieval and modern***Merrill's Hall***

- 5.7 Short lengths of three brick walls were recorded, two in the northern part of the site and one in the central area (Figs 7 and 8) and they appear to represent the 18th century hall and a late 19th century addition. The northernmost NW-SE wall (018, 108 in the evaluation; Photo 4) survived two courses high and was more than 7m long. It was constructed in red brick (240mm x 120mm x 90mm) and bonded with cement mortar built on a concrete foundation (033=116) with the bottom course laid as headers and the second course laid as stretchers three courses wide (0.5m wide). This wall aligns with the south wall of a NW-SE range added on the north side of Merrill's Hall between 1886 and 1902 (*cf.* Figs 3 and 4).
- 5.8 E/W wall 019 (Figs 7 and 8, section A) was 3.63m long by 0.38m wide, within foundation trench 034. It survived to at least seven courses of red brick (250mm x 110mm x 70mm) bonded with lime mortar. It was faced on its northern side, which was the exterior of the north wall of the E-W aligned range (Photos 5 and 6). The western end of the wall (Photo 7) may have been the east side of an entrance in the north wall.
- 5.9 A small section of brickwork (20) in the southern baulk of the central excavation area (Figs 7 and 8) was 0.43m wide x 0.32m high in red brick bonded with lime mortar was the remains of part of the southern range of the Hall.

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- 5.10 Two roughly N-S ditches, 411 and 303 recorded to the east of the Hall during the evaluation date from the 17th-18th century. Ditch 411 aligned with a field boundary on the 1886 OS map, but ditch 303 did not line up with any mapped boundaries.

Front courtyard area

- 5.11 In the north-east corner of the central excavation area, a large pit 016, a cobbled surface (003, 107 in the evaluation) and a well (057) probably relate to a courtyard on the south-west side of the Hall.
- 5.12 The exposed portion of pit 16 was c. 10m wide with gradually sloping sides and a slightly rounded base 0.3m deep and (Figs 7 and 8, section C; Photos 8 and 9). It was filled with a series of deposits (036, 037, 039, 040, 041, 042) including a N/S alignment of large unworked limestone blocks (050; less than 450mm x 300mm x 250mm). A layer of black ash and clinker, 0.18m thick, (036) was overlain by light brown sandy loam, 0.13m thick, (037) filled one side of the stones, whilst greyish silt up to 0.1m deep (041, 042) which contained fragments of post-medieval roof tile, formed across the base of the pit. An overlying deposit of firm, black silty loam, 0.28m thick, (040) contained 17th – 18th century pottery, brick and roof tile fragments, four clay pipe stems and a small fragment of leather probably from a shoe. A residual sherd of a 15th – 16th century Wednesbury ware bowl dated was also recovered and high levels of wood, organic charred material and uncharred seeds in this deposit, suggest it was potentially waterlogged. A north-south line of three 0.1m square wooden stakes (038) appeared to have been driven through the fills of the pit. It was not evident what the stakes were for, but they appeared to be later than the pit.

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- 5.13 A spread of moderately sized pebbles pressed into clay, 5m x 2.25m (003 eval 107) represents a former yard surface between the northern E-W and eastern NNE-SSW ranges of the Hall (Figs 7 and 8; Photos 10 and 11).
- 5.14 Brick-lined well 057 (Figs 7 and 8; Photo 12) in red brick (235mm x 100mm x 80mm) laid in stretchers within cut (051) was not excavated, but was well preserved. Two metal poles (058, 059) and a wooden beam (060) incorporated into its construction and reaching across the mouth of the well may be the remains of a pulley system.

The Moat

- 5.15 The E-W aligned southern arm moat (Figs 6-9, section D; Photos 13 and 14) comprised two cuts, the wider, earlier phase 026=054 (904 in evaluation) containing at least three deposits and the re-cut 049 (927 in evaluation) exclusively contained infill layers of 19th to 20th century building rubble.
- 5.16 Evaluation trenches 5 and 8, which were positioned to target the supposed circuit of the moat, demonstrated that the moat either did not follow the layout suggested by first edition OS mapping, or did not form a full circuit.
- 5.17 The initial cut 026=054/904 was 11.6m wide with a concave profile 1.79m deep. A basal layer of brownish yellow sand (032) was overlain by brownish grey silty sand (031) containing small angular pebbles and occasional charcoal (recorded in the evaluation as 917=921). This was overlain by black sandy clay (030=055; previously recorded as 916=920). Finds were recovered from the uppermost fill (030=920) and comprised one fragment of tile and 16 sherds of late 19th and 20th century pottery. Soil samples from the lower layers (031) and (032) yielded high to moderate amounts of burnt and unburnt wood, a low level of uncharred seed remains and hammerscale, suggesting that these fills were

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accumulating after the Weldless Steel Tube Company works were constructed in 1911.

- 5.18 The later cut 049/927 was at least 3.3m wide and 0.48m deep and contained dark brown sandy clay and building rubble such as crushed brick, ceramic building material and stone (028) dumped to fill the moat ahead of the extension of the Weldless Steel Tube factory.

20th century industrial remains

- 5.19 Numerous brick-built remains associated with the mid-20th century industrial buildings were recorded in the southern part of the excavation area. These included a largely intact surface (024) of flat laid blue brick (225mm x 105mm by 85mm) that had been laid across the moat after it had been backfilled. The surface measured 2.4m wide and extended for 13m, though continued to the north beyond the excavation area and appeared to have been an interior floor surface of one the former buildings (Figs 6 and 7; Photo 15).

6 FINDS

The pottery *Stephanie Rátkai*

- 6.1 The assemblage consisted of medieval, post-medieval and relatively modern sherds, with the latter forming the single largest component (see Tables 1-4). All the pottery was recorded following MPRG Guidelines and accepted professional standards. Pottery from both the evaluation (Rátkai 2022) and excavation are considered in this report.
- 6.2 The assemblage from the trial trenching was very small, which limited the amount of general information about the site that could be obtained from it. However all but one sherd (from Trench 8) came from the moated area, hence the inclusion of the evaluation pottery in this report. Less pottery came from the mitigation but produced much more medieval pottery although fewer sherds overall.
- 6.3 The medieval pottery from fills 013 and 046, Gully 012, and fill 015, Gully 014 was examined under x 20 magnification. There is no established type series for the Wolverhampton area so the fabric descriptions are given in the report. The two gullies had been identified and excavated during the evaluation and recorded as Gully 109, fills 110 and 115, and Gully 113, fill 114. Gully 012 / 109 cut Gully 014 / 113 and produced an isolated island of medieval pottery.
- 6.4 The post-medieval pottery was identified macroscopically and could be divided into known regional ware types. There was a single, discrete group of pottery from this period found in one of the lower fills of Pit 40. During evaluation a post-medieval group came from Ditch 303.
- 6.5 The latest pottery dating to the 19th-20th century was assigned to broad ware types and was not examined in detail.

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- 6.6 All the pottery was quantified by sherd weight and count, and rim count. The medieval and post-medieval pottery was also quantified by rim percentage. Vessel form was recorded where known. Each sherd was dated, although few could be given a close date. All the data were entered onto an Excel spreadsheet and form part of the archive. The catalogue of pottery forms part of the archive.

Medieval pottery fabric descriptions

- 6.7 The absence of a large corpus of excavated medieval pottery from the Wolverhampton area means that it is important that a full record of the Wednesfield pottery is made. There is one published assemblage from the Old Hall, Old Hall Street, Wolverhampton (Rátkai 2010), with which the Wednesfield pottery can be compared. There has been further excavation of this site by Worcester Archaeology, which will be published in due course.

South Staffordshire Whiteware WW01 mid-13th to 14th century

- 6.8 This whiteware has a clean fabric with a smooth surface feel and a smooth look in section with a random scatter of rounded ill-sorted greyish quartz grains 0.25-0.50mm. There are occasional rounded iron oxide inclusion from small flecks to c. 0.25mm, very rarely larger. This is a common fabric in South Staffordshire and is found at Dudley Castle (pers. inspection by author) Walsall (Wrathmell and Wrathmell 1975) and Lichfield (Rátkai 2004) for example. It equates to the Red-painted whiteware fabric found at the Old Hall site (Rátkai 2010).
- 6.9 Vessel form: only a single small jug sherd was found, which came from fill 015 of Gully 014. The sherd had a thin but glossy olive green glaze but in places was a light bright green indicating the addition of small amounts of copper to the lead glaze.

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Buff-Whiteware BW01 mid-13th to 14th/15th century (Photos 16 & 22)

- 6.10 This is usually a cream- or buff-coloured fabric (originally recorded as BUFFWW at assessment) and is normally oxidised throughout. Surface colour varies from cream and buff to orange with a gritty feel. Unlike the WW01 it has a hackly fracture with numerous fine irregular linear voids, possibly left by small pieces of burnt out organic matter. There are sparse inclusions of well-sorted, rounded or sub-rounded, white/grey quartz c.0.25mm. There are rare inclusions of rounded iron oxide. This is another common fabric type in South Staffordshire. This fabric appears to be the same as Fabric ipw1 at Old Hall Street.
- 6.11 Vessel Form: A wide diameter (30cm) ?pipkin with a lid seating rim. Spots and splashes of glaze were visible on the interior and exterior, and the exterior was sooted, heavily in places. The base was missing, so it is not clear if the interior base was glazed. The form is unusual and seems to be a cross between a shouldered jar and a bowl.

Coarse Gritty Cooking Pot CPJC01 12th-13th century (Photos 17-21)

- 6.12 An iron-rich clay body with red-brown oxidised external surface (patchy oxidation in places), otherwise mid-grey (recorded as MEDCPJ during assessment). Angular and subangular, ill-sorted, grey, yellowish and white quartz, 0.25-1.50mm are seen in the clay body with some larger grits are easily visible to the naked eye. These are randomly distributed through the clay body, white or yellowish white in colour, angular and subangular and up to 3-4mm in size. Some smaller translucent quartz grains are visible c.0.25mm and a background scatter of smaller grains <0.1mm, which may or may not be quartzitic. In addition there are rare mudstone fragments up to

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1.0mm and occasional dark angular mineral fragments that could not be identified. There are also rare, narrow, linear voids, some with partly burnt out organic material. A single sherd from 015 had a light, yellowish brown to grey (where reduced) fabric. Sherd surfaces appear 'glittery' particularly under x 20 magnification. However, this sparkle is not caused by mica and is caused by light reflecting off planes of cleavage of some mineral. It is possible that this mineral is feldspar but only proper petrological analysis could determine this. There is no exact parallel for this fabric from the Old Hall site but it could be related to Fabric cp3.

- 6.13 Vessel Forms: Two vessels were recorded. A cooking pot (Photo 21) with an expanded tip to the everted rim, giving a collar-like impression, came from evaluation context (115), Gully 109 / 012. The rim form is unusual for this area of Staffordshire. The vessel is well made, probably coiled built and wheel-finished. Two 'v'-shaped notches on the lower edge of the rim were noted. It is difficult to say if these were deliberate, the result of use or purely accidental. The exterior was sooted.
- 6.14 The second vessel was also a cooking pot, also seemed to be hand-formed and wheel-finished (Photo 22). The surface colour was patchy varying from grey to buff to orange and brown. The rim was fairly plain, everted with a thickened squared tip. The exterior was sooted. It was found in fill (045) of Gully 046 (= Gully 012).
- 6.15 All three fabrics are likely to have been made in South Staffordshire, despite the fact that there is little evidence for kiln sites in the area at this date, although they must have existed. One fabric, for which there is a source, is a late medieval oxidised ware sherd (15th-16th century) that would have been made in Wednesbury, where there was a thriving pottery making industry from the late medieval

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period through to the 17th and probably 18th centuries (Rátkai in prep.). A jug or jar base in Wednesbury ware was found in Ditch 303 during the evaluation. Wednesbury ware sherds were found at the Old Hall site where they were recorded as Fabric lox3.

Wednesbury ware WEDN 15th-16th century

- 6.16 A fine, light brown to orange or sometimes weak red fabric, with a smooth fracture and few inclusions visible to the naked eye. The clay body has numerous pinhole voids visible in the break and rare rounded iron-stained quartz up to 0.25mm. Often the surfaces and margins are light-brown with the remainder of the sherd orange or red. The external surface appears wiped.

Medieval Pottery (Table 1)

- 6.17 The two cooking pots and the pipkin detailed above appear to represent primary deposition. Sherds from the buff-whiteware pipkin, Fabric BW01, were found in fills in both gullies. The greater number (and heavier weight) were found in the southern Gully109/012 (15 sherds 427g) with only five sherds (185g) coming from the northern Gully 113/014. None of the sherds shows signs of wear or exposure to the elements indicating that only a very short period had elapsed between breakage and deposition.
- 6.18 It is unlikely that both gullies were open at the same time despite the large cross-joining pipkin sherds from them, especially as the fills in each were different. The only plausible explanation is that the five pipkin sherds from fill 015 of Gully 014 have been disturbed from Gully 109/012. It is not an entirely satisfactory explanation because of the sherd size and the fact that all the sherds from Gully 014 join with those from Gully 012, which indicates little dispersal of the sort that might be expected when digging a service trench. However, the eastern section of the ditches,

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where they converge, has been heavily disturbed and at this point the exact relationship of the gullies is far from clear.

- 6.19 The fill of the earlier Gully 014 is described as clay with 'clinker and coke' which suggests a post-medieval date and indeed there is a single post-medieval body sherd from a slip-coated ware bowl in the gully fill. It weighed 15g and could be intrusive, although the later 17th- or 18th-century date of this ware would be in keeping with the coke and clinker. The heavy disturbance is therefore unfortunate and prevents a proper understanding of the gullies and their dating.
- 6.20 Other pottery associated with the gullies consists of coarse sandy cooking pot (Fabric CPJC01), and single sherds of sandy cooking pot (Fabric CPJ01) and South Staffordshire Whiteware (Fabric WW01). The latter two date to the 13th-14th century and were only found in Gully 014. The coarse sandy ware was found in Gully 012 apart from one sherd (3g) in Gully 014, which was found during the evaluation. Large sherds of coarse sandy cooking pot came from two vessels (see above) and included rim sherds. Again these, like the pipkin, were not abraded and may have been contemporary with it. The most likely date for the backfilling of Gully 012 seems to be in the mid- to late-13th century.
- 6.21 A single body sherd from a bowl of post-medieval slip-coated ware was found in Gully 014. It weighed 15g and could be intrusive, although the later 17th- or 18th-century date of this ware would be in keeping with the coke and clinker found in the fill.

Table 1: medieval pottery groups

Feature	Fill	Fabric Name	Code	Qty	Wght	MR	RD	Rper	MB	Form
Gully 014	015	Sandy cooking pot	CPJC01	1	23				1	cpj
Gully 014	015	S. Staffs Whiteware	WW01	1	5					jug
Gully 014	015	Slip-coated ware	SLIPCO	1	15					bowl
Gully 014	015	Buff-Whiteware	BW01	5	185	1	30	24		pipkin large

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Gully 113/014	114	Coarse sandy cooking pot	CPJC01	1	3						cpj
Gully 113/014	114	Sandy cooking pot	CPJC01	1	3						cooking pot
Gully 012	013	Buff-Whiteware	BW01	11	352	1	30	20			pipkin large
Gully 045/012	046	Coarse sandy cooking pot	CPJC01	2	23					1	cpj
Gully 045/012	046	Coarse sandy cooking pot	CPJC01	1	164	1	28	09			cpj
Gully 109/012	110	Buff-Whiteware	BW01	4	75	1	30	11			pipkin large
Gully 109/012	115	Coarse sandy cooking pot	CPJC01	8	186	1	34	11			cpj
TOTAL				36	1034	5	152	75	2		

MR – Minimum Rim count; RD – Rim Diameter; Rper – Rim percentage; MB – Minimum Base count

Post-medieval Pottery (Table 2)

- 6.22 Post-medieval features consisted of Pit 016, and Ditch 303 from the Evaluation. Fill (040) of the pit contained a range of pottery consistent with a date of late-17th to early-18th century. The blackware, yellow ware and coarseware in combination typify the 17th century in South Staffordshire and North Warwickshire, although the yellow ware has died out by c. 1725. They are often, as here found with slip-decorated wares which in this case suggest a later-17th to early/mid-18th-century date. The combed slipware cup was a particularly nicely made example. Bowls and mugs were the only other vessel types that could be identified. A residual Wednesbury ware bowl sherd was found in this group.
- 6.23 Ditch 303 contained pottery that could have been a little earlier than that from the pit. The pottery consisted of sherds from four blackware mugs and a coarseware bowl and a ?jar. A sherd from a residual Wednesbury-type jug or jar was also in the fill.

Table 2: post-medieval pottery groups

Feature	Fill	Fabric Name	Code	Qty	Wght	MR	RD	Rper	MB	Form
Ditch 303	304	Wednesbury ware	WEDN	1	34				1	jug/jar
Ditch 303	304	Blackware	BLW	1	9					drv
Ditch 303	304	Blackware	BLW	1	8				1	mug

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Ditch 303	304	Blackware	BLW	1	4	1	10	14		drv
Ditch 303	304	Blackware	BLW	1	8					drv
Ditch 303	304	Coarseware	CW	1	9					jar?
Ditch 303	304	Coarseware	CW	1	18	1	34	04		bowl
Pit 016	040	Wednesbury ware	WEDN	1	22					bowl
Pit 016	040	Blackware	BLW	2	15					?
Pit 016	040	Blackware	BLW	1	12					mug
Pit 016	040	Yellow ware	YW	1	15	1	23	06		bowl
Pit 016	040	Coarseware	CW	2	17					?
Pit 016	040	Combed slipware	SLPW	5	21	1	13	16		cup
Pit 016	040	Trailed slipware (d-o-l)	SLPW	1	9	1	24	06		bowl
Pit 016	040	Ceramic building material	CBM	1	26					rooftile

MR – Minimum Rim count; RD – Rim Diameter; Rper – Rim percentage; MB –

Minimum Base count; d-o-l – dark on light slip trails; drv – drinking vessel

Late Post-medieval and Modern Pottery (Tables 3 and 4)

- 6.24 During mitigation more pottery was recovered from the moat, fill (30). There is very little that can be said about since the sherds were quite small and there were no back stamps or makers marks that might help date the pottery securely. The usual blue transfer-printed plate sherds were present, a brown transfer-printed sherd that probably dated to the 20th century. Two small cane ware sherds with white interior glaze were recorded, one possible from a dish. The most interesting sherd was a small fragment of a majolica vessel with a cobalt blue background and ?prunus blossom. This is likely to be a product of George Jones and Sons (Photos 22 and 23). This type of pottery is datable to the late 19th - early 20th century. The remaining pottery consisted of utilitarian whiteware. Pottery from the Moat found during the Evaluation was also consistent with a late 19th - early 20th-century date. Industrial banded slipware reminiscent of Cornish ware sherds were recorded along with brown transfer-printed ware and utilitarian whiteware. Buff stoneware sherds from a preserve jar and a jar with an iron wash around the rim were. Part of a figurine, possibly in Parian ware was also present.

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Table 3: pottery from the moat

Feature	Fill	Fabric Name	Code	Qty	Wght	MR	MB	Form
Moat 026	030	Blue Transfer-printed ware	BITrans	1	3		1	plate
Moat 026	030	Blue Transfer-printed ware	BITrans	1	36		1	plate
Moat 026	030	Cane ware	CANEW	1	3			?
Moat 026	030	Cane ware	CANEW	1	35	1		dish
Moat 026	030	Majolica	MAJ	2	24			hollow ware
Moat 026	030	Modern glazed ware	MGW	2	214		1	plate
Moat 026	030	Utilitarian whiteware	UTW	1	14	1		jar
Moat 026	030	Utilitarian whiteware	UTW	4	45		1	?
Moat 026	030	Ceramic building material	CBM	1	55			rooftile
Moat 927	909	Buff stoneware	STWbuff	1	78	1		jar
Moat 927	909	Industrial slipware	INDSLPW	1	23			jar?
Moat 927	922	Brown Transfer-printed ware	BrTrans	1	2			?
Moat 904	920	Buff stoneware	STWbuff	1	12			preserve jar
Moat 927	922	Industrial slipware	INDSLPW	1	4	1		bowl
Moat 904	920	Parian ware?	PARN?	1	4			figurine
Moat 904	920	Utilitarian whiteware	UTW	1	4			?
TOTAL				21	556	4	4	

MR – Minimum Rim count; MB – Minimum Base count

6.25 Most of the remaining post-1800 pottery from Evaluation and Mitigation could not be closely dated. However, a sherd from a large serving plate (probably a meat plate) from deposit 002, had retained part of its printed backstamp, B&H within a partial cartouche and pattern name of 'Asiatic Pheasants'. This identifies the makers as Beech and Hancock 1857-1876, of Tunstall. The plate probably dates to c.1870. A tea cup or possibly a coffee can (Photo 24) was found in Ditch 927 The transfer print had been poorly applied but the pattern is a less common one than traditional willow pattern.

Table 4: pottery from late layers and features

Feature/Layer	Ctxt	Fabric Name	Code	Qty	Wght	MR	MB	Form
Layer	002	Blue Transfer-printed ware	BITrans	1	55	1		Plate (?meat plate)
Layer	002	Late Stoneware	LSTW	1	237			Flagon

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Layer	002	Drainage pipe	DrainP	1	76			Drainpipe
Ashy charcoal layer	102	Blue Transfer-printed ware	BITrans	1	4	1		Plate
Ashy charcoal layer	102	Blue Transfer-printed ware	BITrans	1	1			?
Ashy charcoal layer	102	Cane ware	CANEW	3	13			Bowl
Ashy charcoal layer	102	Creamware	CRW	1	4	1		Plate?
Ashy charcoal layer	102	Flow Blue?	FLOWB	1	2			?
Ashy charcoal layer	102	Porcelain	PORC	1	1			?
Ashy charcoal layer	102	Utilitarian whiteware	UTW	2	1			?
Ashy charcoal layer	102	White salt-glazed stoneware	WSG	1	7	1		Jar
Clinker layer	204	Coarseware	CW	2	89			Jar
Clinker layer	204	Coarseware	CW	2	80		1	Bowl
Clinker layer	204	Coarseware	CW	1	175	1		Bowl wide-mouthed
Clinker layer	204	Pearlware	PLW	1	13	1		Plate, blue shell edge
Layer	205	Coarseware	CW	1	24			Jar
Field boundary fill	405	Slip-coated ware	SLIPCO	1	5			?
Sandy silt layer	804	Coarseware	CW	1	12		1	?
Black ashy layer	911	Grey stoneware	STWgrey	1	57		1	Preserve jar
Ditch 927 fill	912	Blue Transfer-printed ware	BITrans	7	47	1	1	Teacup
Ditch 927 fill	912	Cane ware	CANEW	1	48	1		Bowl
TOTAL				32	951	8	4	

MR – Minimum Rim count; MB – Minimum Base count

Discussion

- 6.26 This small assemblage provides small snapshots of pottery in use in the medieval, late medieval, post-medieval and later periods. This is an important consideration since so few good groups of medieval pottery have been excavated in Wolverhampton. This is particularly important in an area that has seen little archaeological excavation and an area in which medieval finds have been few.

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- 6.27 The medieval pottery is particularly interesting because it seems to represent a primary deposition. The buff-whiteware fabric (BW01), almost certainly derived from Coal Measure Clays belongs in the tradition of South Staffordshire/North Warwickshire iron-poor wares but the vessel form is unusual. The coarse-gritted cooking pots (CPJC01) are more unusual. Similar fabrics with large white grits are known from Birmingham (Rátkai 2009, fabrics cpj12-14) and Redditch (personal inspection by author) but it is not likely that they are from the same geographic source, although the clay is probably from the same type of surface geology. The uneven distribution of the quartz grains through the clay matrix and their differing sizes suggests that they were not a deliberately added tempering agent and must therefore occur naturally in the clay deposits. It is likely that the Wednesfield pots were made locally. The sandy cooking pot (CPJ01) is presumably local also but the fabric has no particular distinguishing features.
- 6.28 These sherds seem to indicate that the moated site was in existence by at least the mid-13th century, since they cannot possibly be derived from manuring scatters, given the sherd size and lack of abrasion.
- 6.29 It is interesting that so few late medieval sherds (15th-16th century) were found. The two that were recorded were Wednesbury ware, named after the place of manufacture, although it is not impossible that similar wares were made elsewhere in the Black Country. This type of pottery was traded widely in the West Midlands.
- 6.30 Post medieval pottery dated from the 17th and 18th centuries. As would be expected, in the post-medieval period in this area of the country, blackware (also known as Midlands blackware) was present and also brown- or black-glazed coarseware. These wares were made in Wednesbury and the Staffordshire Potteries and probably in other parts of Staffordshire. In this respect a coarseware bowl rimsherd from clinker

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layer 204 in the evaluation, that probably dates to the 1820s, was markedly distorted and had slag-like adhesions. It could just be a 'second' but it could also indicate some not too distant pottery production. Other post-medieval pottery from the site consisted of yellow ware (also known as Midlands yellow ware), slip-decorated wares and slip-coated ware; again these are commonplace on sites dating to the 17th-18th century. More refined table wares, such as creamware and white salt-glazed stoneware were present but were too few for any conclusions to be drawn.

- 6.31 The medieval and post-medieval pottery admittedly forms only a small assemblage. However there is a growing corpus of pottery of these periods from moated sites, which piece by piece expands our knowledge of the material culture of those who lived in these places, a field of study that has a good deal of potential that has not yet been tapped.
- 6.32 The presence of the majolica sherds and a buff stoneware preserve jar show that pottery was entering the moat in the late 19th century and early 20th century but small groups of 19th century pottery from the Evaluation are too randomly scattered for any meaningful interpretation.

Other Finds *Bekky Hillman***Animal bone**

- 6.33 A total of 16 fragments of animal bone (255g) were recovered from eight contexts during the two phases of investigation. Identifiable cattle bones from the evaluation consisted of a complete astragalus (205), a fragment of rib (909) which had evidence of both butchery and gnawing.
- 6.34 Only one tooth was identified as coming from a sheep (304), there was a single chicken humerus (102) and a fish vertebra (922), all recovered during the evaluation.

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- 6.35 Six bone fragments were only identifiable as coming from a medium sized mammal and two from large animals.

Medieval

- 6.36 Two bone fragments were found in fill 013=109, from the fill of the earlier of the two parallel gullies 012. A shaft fragment from a medium to large mammal and a shaft fragment from a large mammal radius with a polished surface indicating that it was utilised, there were no signs of butchery on either fragments. Three unidentifiable fragments weighing 8g were also found from context 115 from gully 109 in the evaluation.
- 6.37 Two further animal bone fragments came from fill 015, the fill of later gully 014=113. Both bones were from medium mammals, the profile of the rib shaft fragment suggestive of sheep or goat, the scapula fragment can only be identified by size. During evaluations three bone fragments were found from fill 114 of gully 113, two rib shaft fragments with evidence of butchery and slightly polished surfaces which could indicate a secondary use, and a small fragment of vertebra, again, from a medium mammal.

Post Medieval

- 6.38 Seven further bone fragments from later contexts were found during the evaluation stage. A chicken humerus from 102, a cattle astragalus from 205, a sheep tooth and two long bone fragments from 304 and a cattle rib shaft fragment from 909. These are not considered further here.
- 6.39 The animal bones were all recovered from the north-west part of the site, but the small size of the assemblage means that firm conclusions cannot be drawn with regards to farming or husbandry practices.

The Ceramic Building Material

- 6.40 A total of eight brick fragments (21.5kg) from five contexts relating to the building were recorded, one marked with 'Hawkins colliery' and another with 'Utopia', others were all unmarked.

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- 6.41 Two fragments from context 040 fill of pit 016 were handmade. Two sample bricks from red brick walls 018 and 019 were taken to show that those from wall 018 were taller and longer than those in wall 019.
- 6.42 During the evaluation five brick fragments came from context 102 an ash layer that also contained post medieval pottery. One brick was marked with 'Hawkins Colliery' coming from Henry Hawkins either Cannock Old Coppice Colliery or perhaps the Longhouse brickworks which was situated the opposite side of the canal to the colliery dating from the 20th century. Another of the brick was marked with 'Utopia' made by the Aldridge Brick and Tile Company, Walsall who started trading in 1874 and closed in 1965 (uknamedbricks.blogspot.com accessed March 2023). Three further fragments are unmarked. A further unstratified brick (28) was also recovered, this had no markings.
- 6.43 Eight fragments of handmade roof (274g) tile were also recovered. One from context 030, three from 040 during mitigation, this context also had four unidentifiable fragments of ceramic building material. During evaluations two fragments were found in contexts 304 and two further in 922.
- 6.44 The assemblage size and date means further research was not undertaken.

Other artefacts

- 6.45 Five clay pipe stems fragments weighing 15g were recovered, four from context 040 from pit 016 and one from 102 in the evaluation, with no associated bowl fragments.
- 6.46 Two sherds of glass (22g) were recovered from fill 040 in pit 016, one from the body of a green bottle and one from a clear green vessel. A single find of leather (5g), also from this context is likely a piece of post medieval shoe.

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6.47 Given the small quantities and late dates for these finds further research was not considered necessary.

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7 ENVIRONMENTAL EVIDENCE *Bekky Hillman*

- 7.1 A suite of ten samples of between 10 and 20 litres were taken from ditches, gullies, the moat and a layer containing pottery and tile.
- 7.2 Ten sub-samples of 2 litres, one from each bulk sample, were processed for waterlogged material with the remaining 170 litres processed by washover flotation. Washover samples were processed by Archaeology Warwickshire using the standard procedures for floatation with residues retained on a 500micron mesh and flots retained on a 300micron sieve. Dried flots were sieved and fractionated into 4mm, 2mm and <2mm fractions from which any charcoal or charred remains were sorted, separated and bagged.
- 7.3 Waterlogged sub-samples were processed by Archaeology Warwickshire using standard waterlogged bucket processing procedures with flots fractionated to 300 micron during processing, flots and residues stored in water in cold storage.
- 7.4 All samples were rapidly assessed using an Aspen stereo binocular microscope. Results are shown in Table 5.

Table 5: Results table for all samples

Sample Number	Feature	Description	Spot date / phase	Vol taken/ processed (L)	Flot Charred/ uncharred (ml)	Grain	Legume / pea	Weed seeds	Chaff	Charcoal 4mm	Charcoal 2mm	Notes
1	115	Fill of gully [109]	Medieval	20/18	<5/5	-	-	-	-	C	B	Uncharred Rubus fruticosus, Rannunculus, coal
1				20/02	Water-logged							Rubus fruticosus, Rannunculus, woody material and leaf fragments

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2	114	Fill of gully [113]	Post-medieval	20/18	100/ 300	C	-	-	C	A * *	A * *	coal and clinker, Avena, 1 culm node, uncharred wood and weed seeds
2				20/02	Water-logged							Wood and leaf remains rare unidentified weed seeds
3	804	Layer containing pottery and tile	Modern	10/8	20	-	-	-	B	A *		coal, uncharred weed seeds
3				10/02	Water-logged							Mostly woody material, few seeds
4	920	Secondary fill of moat [904]	Modern	20/18		A	-	C	-	B	A *	coal and clinker/hammerscale grain preservation very poor, uncharred wood, rare weed seeds
4				20/02	Water-logged							Larger fractions contain coal and clinker Smaller fractions woody material and weed seeds
11	013	Fill of medieval gully [012]	Medieval	20/18	20	-	-	C	-	C	B	organic remains, Grass seed, Uncharred Rubus fruticosus
				20/2	10 water-logged							organic remains, Grass seed, Uncharred Rubus fruticosus
12	015	Fill of gully [014]	Post-medieval	20/18	20/ 100	C	-	-	-	A	A *	Slag, unident grain, Uncharred seeds Rubus fruticosus, Sambucus nigra, wood
				20/2	150 Water-logged							Slag, unident grain, Uncharred seeds Rubus fruticosus, Sambucus nigra, wood
13	040	Fill of pit [016]	Post medieval / Modern	20/18	75/75	C	-	-	-	-	-	Organic charred material, uncharred Rubus fruticosus, ranunculus and wood
				20/2	Water-logged							Organic charred material,

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													uncharred Rubus fruticosus, ranunculus and wood
14	044	Fill of pit [43]	undated	20/18	10	-	-	A	-	C	B		tiny seeds all one type
				20/2	Water-logged								tiny seeds all one type
15	32	Fill of moat [21]	Modern	20/18	30/20	-	-	-	-	-	-		Organic charred material, Uncharred seeds, Wood, Hammerscale
				20/2	Water-logged								Organic charred material, Uncharred seeds, Wood, Hammerscale
16	31	Fill of moat [21]	Modern	20/18	50/100	-	-	B	-	-	-		Organic burnt material, uncharred woody material, Beetle casings
				20/2	Water-logged								Organic burnt material, uncharred woody material, Beetle casings

KEY: A** = > 75; A* = >20; A=10-20; B= 5-9; C= 1-5. LW = LARGE WOOD; RW = ROUNDWOOD

- 7.5 Charred plant remains were generally sparse across the site, with the majority of flots being made up of charcoal and uncharred material mostly consisting small fragments of wood and leaf and coal.
- 7.6 Samples 13, 15 and 16 contained quantities of charred organic material, with sample 13 from pit 16 containing over 100ml. This may represent burnt bread or organic material such as dung or peat which was often used as a fuel source. As these contexts are unrelated to the medieval features they are not considered further here.
- 7.7 Samples taken from the supposed moat represented the 19th century backfilling and therefore contained no evidence of the medieval environment. Once again these are not considered further here.

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-
- 7.8 Four samples (1, 2, 11 and 12), from two gully features were considered to be of medieval origin with samples taken during the evaluation and mitigation.
 - 7.9 Samples from gully 109=012 contained small amounts of charcoal but no charred plant remains. Uncharred seeds of plants favouring disturbed ground included *Ranunculus* sp (buttercup) and *Rubus fruticosus* (bramble) were present with small fragments of leaf and woody material.
 - 7.10 Samples from gully 113=014 contained mostly charcoal and coal with some clinker and slag fragments. The charred plant remains consisted of *Avena* (oat) in very small quantities (less than 5 grains) and a few fragments of unidentified grain. There was also a single culm node. Uncharred plants of disturbed ground included *Rubus fruticosus* (bramble), *Sambucus nigra* (elder) and grass seeds.
 - 7.11 It is likely that the uncharred plant remains found relate to the period when the gullies began to silt up and fell into disuse. All of these plant remains are native and found in abundance so there is also the possibility that they are intrusive and relate to later activities on the site.

8 DISCUSSION

- 8.1 The evaluation and excavation of the north-west corner of the site at Revolution Park was designed to recover information relating to the supposed medieval moated enclosure if any survived below the former industrial structures that occupied the site until the later 20th century.

Medieval

- 8.2 Despite considerable effort, evidence for medieval activity was restricted to a few sherds of pottery in a pair of narrow parallel gullies. The fill of gully (014) contained later material, such as coal, clinker and a sherd of post-medieval pottery, suggesting it was later than 012.
- 8.3 There was no evidence to suggest a function for the gullies, but they may be remnants of former boundaries extending east-west across the site, with gully 014 being a replacement for gully 012.
- 8.4 There was no evidence to suggest that the putative moat was medieval. Neither was there any evidence for any medieval structures, although, analysis of the pottery from the gullies suggests primary deposition and, therefore, domestic activity within this area. Sherds from a jug in a similar fabric and date were also recovered from a disturbed and possibly redeposited context during evaluation of Homestead Moat in Ashmore Park, c. 2.5km to the northwest of the site (Cane 1998, 3).
- 8.5 The pottery assemblage recovered from the site is generally domestic and utilitarian in nature. Interestingly, only two sherds of 15th – 16th century pottery were recovered (from a ditch to the east of the hall and an 18th century pit), but even though a number of fragments of post-medieval roof tile were recovered from the 18th century pit, there is little evidence to presume intensive continuity in settlement activity at the site between the 12th – 13th and 17th - 18th centuries.

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Post-medieval Merrill's Hall

- 8.6 Elements of Merrill's Hall survived in the northern half of the excavation area. Parts of three walls were plotted and found to align with buildings on the 1886 and 1902 maps.
- 8.7 The first reference to Merrill's Hall is from the 18th century and a 20th century painting of Merrill's Hall by Roger Felton, which was possibly a copy of an earlier painting, shows the front (west) elevation and possible courtyard area of the hall (Wolverhampton Archives & Local Studies ref. no. P/9075). The painting shows a red-brick building of late 18th or early 19th century date with the main NE-SW range shown with another, smaller NE-SW range on its rear NE corner. This matches the layout shown on the late Ordnance Survey mapping of the site from 1886 through to its demolition in the late 20th century.
- 8.8 What is not clear is whether the hall shown in the painting was a new build, or a refurbishment of an earlier building, including a new fashionable brick façade. There was no evidence recovered for any earlier buildings on the site, but the painting does appear to show that the hall had a cellar, so its construction may have removed traces of earlier buildings.

The moat feature

- 8.9 There is no evidence that there ever was a conventional moat. Targeted positioning of trial trenches during the evaluation recorded the southern arm of the moat but found no evidence of a northern return on its east side. All known historic mapping evidence of the moat shows it as L-shaped in plan around the southwest corner of the hall. The first known reference to it being a moat is from the name Moat Bank for the adjacent plot on the tithe map and from that its possible rectangular circuit has been assumed.

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-
- 8.10 Both the Tithe map of 1842 and the 1886 estate sale map depict both the west and southern arms of the moat as longer than on the 1st edition OS map of 1886. The sale map, which seems to have been largely based on the earlier tithe map, depicts a building over the northern end of the west arm, suggesting the moat was at least partly being filled in and the area re-landscaped during the later 19th century.
- 8.11 It is thought that during the 13th century the settlement of wooded areas in Warwickshire and South Staffordshire comprised development of numerous single-moated halls or farmsteads, with the moats used to exclude deer or other woodland animals (Rowlands 1987). Moat construction from later periods is thought to be largely a fashion with the moats serving a purely decorative purpose (Larkham 1984, 9).
- 8.12 The evidence from the evaluation and excavation suggests that the Merrill's Hall L-shaped pond shown on the 19th century mapping was the extent of the 'moat' and that it may have been dug as a decorative feature during the 18th century development of the Hall.
- 8.13 The grounds to the east of Merrill's Hall are shown on the 1st edition OS map as a wooded area with open fields to the north and south. Two ditches recorded during the evaluation phase in this area were found to contain 17th and 18th century pottery, with the easternmost ditch 411 lining up with a field boundary known from the 1886 mapping. Although ditch 303 was positioned roughly in an area where the northern return of the moat may have been expected, it was substantially narrower and shallower than the cut of the moat, and was presumably part of a boundary within the Hall's grounds.
- 8.14 Analysis of similar moated manor sites in South Staffordshire and beyond has shown that the layout of moats differed greatly between the sites with few patterns which could usefully be drawn out to aid the understanding of

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an earlier, potential layout of Merrill's Hall moat. However, it is interesting that sites such as Ashmore Park and Prestwood Farm are depicted on 1886 mapping as full rectangular circuits, with the manor houses located outside the circuit of the moat. Both sites are documented as having earlier structures within the moated enclosure, with the manor at Prestwood rebuilt to the west of the moat after the old farmhouse burned down in 1612 (Larkham 1984, Appendix 1, 41). Ashmore Park is speculated to have had a 13th century farmhouse within the moat, that was rebuilt in the 19th century outside of the enclosure.

- 8.15 This is unlike the case of the 18th – early 19th century Merrill's Hall, which was presumed to stand inside the moated enclosure, which may further support the conclusion that Merrill's Hall moat never formed a full circuit.

Modern

- 8.16 Modern structural remains were identified at the southern end of the site and were related to a single large industrial building of the Weldless Steel Tube Company, seen on mapping on the western edge of the site from 1914 to 1947.

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1: General view east across southern end of the excavation area, with the moat visible on the left



2: WNW facing sections of medieval gullies 012 and 014

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3: E facing section of gully 045(=12) with gully 061(=014) visible in plan to R



4: Wall 018, looking NNE

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5: Faced northern side of Wall 019



6: Interior of Wall 019

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7: Faced western end of Wall 019



8: Pit 016, showing in-situ large unworked stone (50) in section

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9: Pit 016, showing in-situ wooden stake (36) in section



10: Cobbled surface 003 facing south-west

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11: Cobbled surface 003 facing east



12: Well 057

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13: View east along the moat showing the early 20th century rubble fill



14: East facing section of moat

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15: General view SW across intact industrial building floors 022, 024 and wall 023



16: Buff-Whiteware pipkin sherds

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17: Coarse sandy cooking pot from fill (115), Gully 012



18: Coarse sandy cooking pot from fill (046) Gully 012

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19-21: Fabric CPJC01

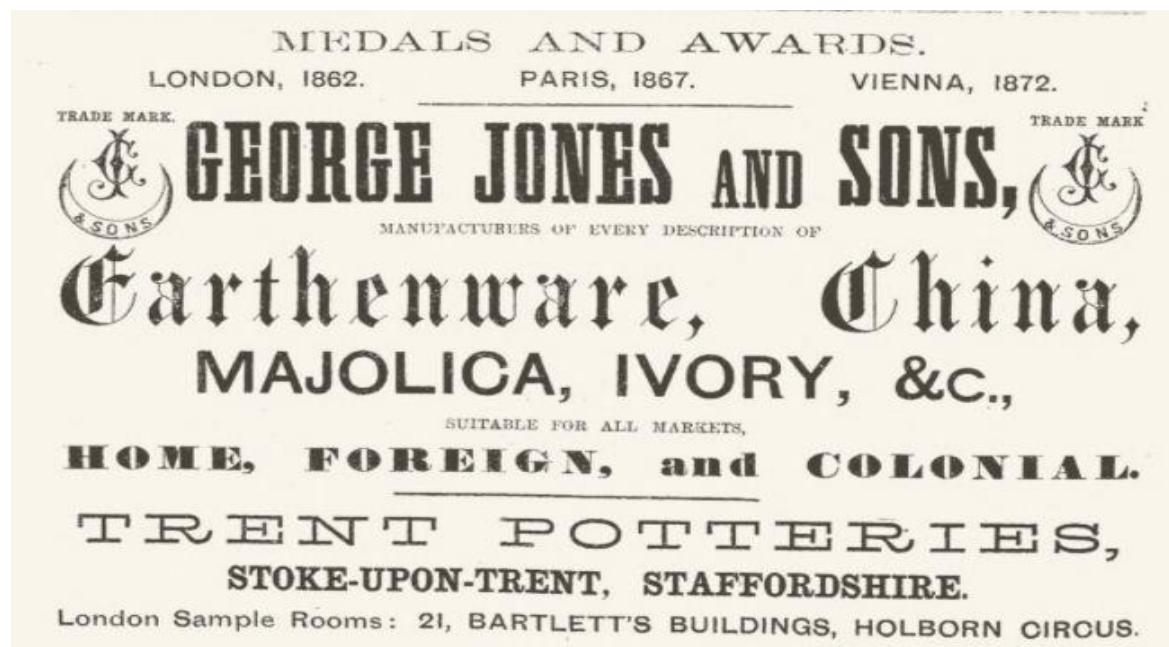


22: Fabric BW01

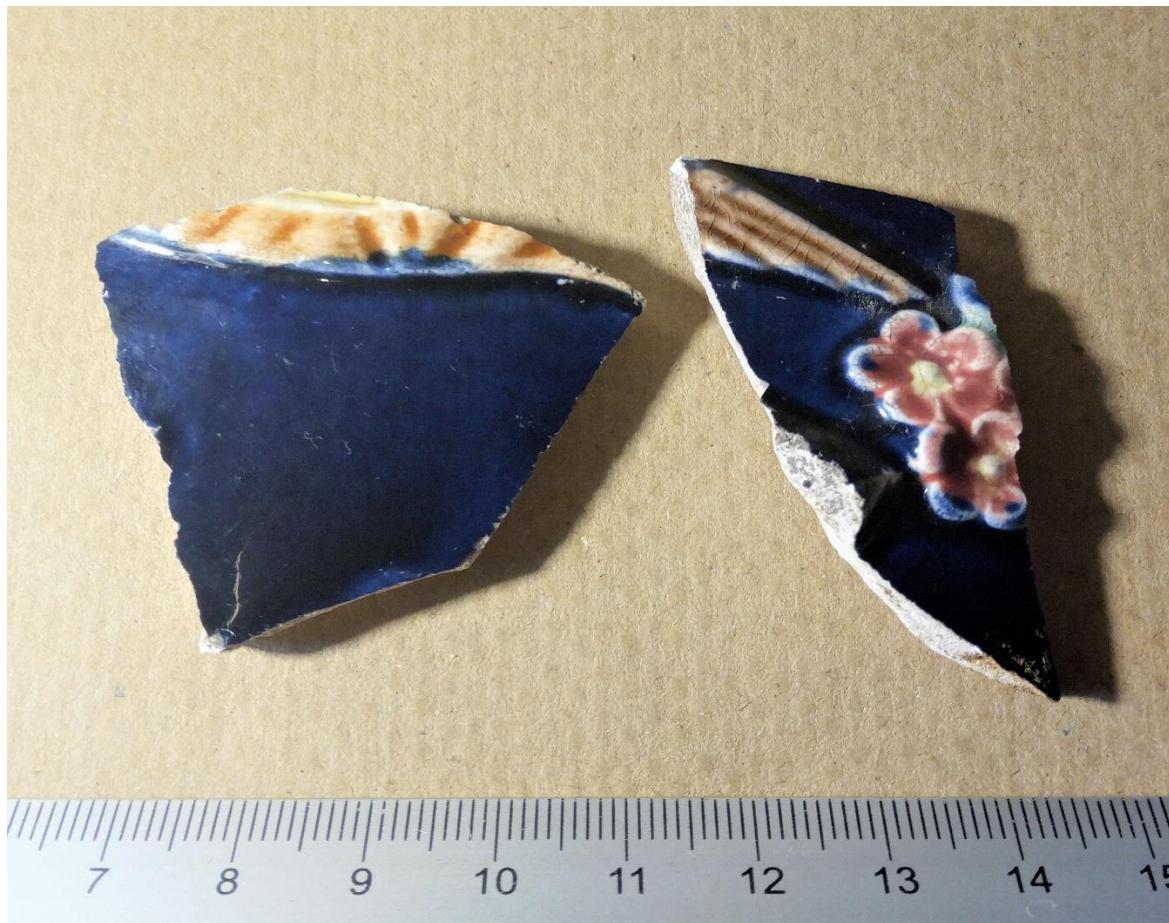
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23: Advertisement for George Jones and Sons (taken from
<http://thepotteries.org>)



24: Majolica sherds from the fill of the moat

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25: Tea cup (or coffee can?) from Ditch 927

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APPENDICES

A List of contexts

Context	Description	Width (m)	Thickness (m)	Comment
001	Reinforced concrete	N/A	<0.3	Modern concrete
002	Dark brown and black sandy silt with brick, tile, stone, clinker and ash	N/A	<0.4	Deposit
003	Cobbled surface, cobbles 30mm to 150mm	5m	0.15	Yard surface, same as 107 in evaluation
004	Red brick square	1.37	0.30	Manhole
005	Concrete capping	0.4	N/A	Modern services
006	Concrete foundation	N/A	>1.2	Large, heavily reinforced concrete
007	Modern cut	N/A	>1.2	Containing 006
008	Fill around 006	N/A	>1.2	Fill of 007
009	Yellowish red clay	N/A	N/A	Natural geology
010	Square of concrete lined in red brick (240mm x 120mm x 60mm)	3m	N/A	Industrial floor surface
011	Service trench	0.4	N/A	Modern service
012	ESE-WNW linear with sharply breaking sides and a concave base	0.63	0.25	Cut of gully, filled by 013, cuts 015, same as 109 in evaluation
013	Dark bluish grey silty clay with small angular pebbles	0.63	0.25	Fill of gully 012, same as 115 in evaluation
014	ESE-WNW linear with gradually breaking sides and a concave base	0.6	0.18	Cut of gully, filled by 015, same as 061, and 113 in evaluation
015	Dark grey silty clay with clinker and coke	0.6	0.18	Fill of gully 014, cut by 012, same as 062, and

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				114 in evaluation
016	Probably circular with gradually sloping sides and a concave base	N/A	0.3	Cut of pit, Filled by 036, 037, 038, 039, 040, 041, 042
017	Randomly laid, sometimes bonded with lime mortar, surface of red brick 0.23m x 0.1m x 0.08m, 1 course deep	10.3	0.08	Red brick sub-floor layer
018	Over 7m long red brick 0.25m x 0.12m x 0.09m bonded with cement mortar, 2 courses high, 3 courses wide	0.25	0.1	Red brick wall, forming NW extension to Merrill's Hall, same as 108 in evaluation
019	Over 3.63m long red brick 0.25m x 0.11m x 0.07m bonded with lime mortar 3 courses wide, 7 courses high	0.38	0.68	Red brick wall, forming western range of Merrill's Hall, within cut 034
020	Build of red brick of unknown size and lime mortar	0.43	0.32	Section of wall, surviving under baulk
021	Made of cement and red brick	>1	>0.2	Manhole
022	Over 10m long, made of blue brick 0.23m x 0.11m x 0.08m bonded with cement mortar	<1.1	0.08	Heavily damaged brick floor
023	Over 15m long, made of red brick 0.23m x 0.11m x 0.08m bonded with cement mortar	<0.34	<0.16	Red brick wall
024	Over 13m long, made of blue brick 0.225m x 0.105m x 0.085m	<2.4	<0.1	Blue brick surface

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	bonded with cement mortar			
025	2.8m long section of wall made of blue brick 0.21m x 0.07m x 0.05m bonded with lime mortar	0.21	0.9	Small section of wall
026	E-W linear with sharply breaking sides and a concave base	>3.4	<1.1	Cut of moat, same as 054, and 904 in evaluation
027	Dark brownish black sandy silt with brick and angular unworked stone	N/A	0.4	Rubble layer
028	Dark brown sandy clay with brick and angular unworked stone	N/A	0.48	Fill of moat re-cut 049
029	Drainage pipe, associated with 20 th century industrial remains	N/A	>1	Drain
030	Black sandy clay with CBM and angular unworked stone	N/A	<0.52	Fill of moat 026, same as 055, and 916=920 in evaluation
031	Brownish grey silty sand with charcoal and angular unworked stone	N/A	<0.2	Secondary Fill of moat 026, same as 917=921 in evaluation
032	Brownish yellow sand	N/A	>0.18	Basal fill of moat 026
033	Lime based cement	N/A	<0.12	Foundation underlying 018, same as 116 in evaluation
034	NW-SE linear with vertical sides and a near flat base	0.38	0.18	Construction cut containing wall 019
035	Yellowish brown clay loam with brick	0.2	0.18	Fill of 034, around wall 019

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	fragments and charcoal			
036	Dark grey black ash and clinker	N/A	0.18	Fill of pit 016
037	Light brown sandy loam	N/A	0.13	Fill of pit 016
038	0.1m wide wooden stakes	0.1	N/A	Line of wooden stakes within pit 016
039	Grey sandy silty loam with red clay	N/A		Fill of pit 016
040	Black silty loam with small pebbles and charcoal	N/A	0.28	Fill of pit 016
041	Greenish grey silty loam	N/A	0.1	Fill of pit 016
042	Dark grey silty loam	N/A	N/A	Fill of pit 016
043	Rectangular NNW-SSE with near vertical sides and a near flat base 2.52m long	0.89	0.25	Rectangular cut
044	Brownish red sandy clay with charcoal and rounded pebbles	0.89	0.25	Fill of undated rectangular pit 043
045	ESE-WNW linear with sharply breaking sides and a concave base	0.45	0.37	Cut of gully, same as 012
046	Very dark grey silty clay with pebbles	0.45	0.37	Fill of gully 045
047	Unknown shape with sharply breaking sides and a near flat base	0.42	0.15	Cut of possible pit
048	Brown silty clay loam with small rounded pebbles	0.42	0.15	Fill of 047
049	E-W linear with gradually breaking sides and a concave base	>3.3	>0.48	Re-cut of moat, same as 927 in evaluation

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050	Large unworked limestone blocks <0.45m x 0.3m x 0.25m	N/A	0.3m	Line of large unworked stones, within 016
051	Circular in plan with vertical sides	0.96	N/A	Cut of well
052	Reddish yellow sandy clay	N/A	N/A	Natural geology, same as 009
053	VOID			VOID
054	Possibly linear in plan with steep sides	N/A	N/A	Possible cut of moat, same as 026
055	Black ashy clay containing brick demolition material	N/A	N/A	Fill of 054, same as 030
056	Brownish yellow sandy clay	N/A	N/A	Modern overburden
057	Red brick 235mm x 100mm x 80mm	<0.96	N/A	Masonry forming well
058	Metal pole	N/A	N/A	Part of former pulley system
059	Metal pole	N/A	N/A	Part of former pulley system
060	Wooden plank	N/A	N/A	Part of former pulley system
061	ESE-WNW linear with gradually breaking sides and concave base	N/A	N/A	Cut of gully, same as 014
062	Dark grey silty clay	N/A	N/A	Fill of gully 061, same as 015

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B List of Finds

Context	SF number	Material	Quantity/ Weight	Type
002		Pottery	3/368g	1 BITrans Blue Transfer-printed ware 1 LSTW Late Stoneware 1 DrainP Drainage pipe
003		Pottery	1/3g	1 BITrans Blue Transfer-printed ware
008		Pottery	2/44g	1 WW01 S. Staffs Whiteware
013		Animal bone	2/27g	1 Large mammal radius fragment 1 Large mammal rib fragment
013		Pottery	11/351g	11 BW01 Buff-Whiteware
013		Slate	1/10g	Small fragment
015		Animal bone	2/26g	1 medium mammal scapula fragment 1 medium mammal rib
015		Pottery	8/228g	1 CPJC01 Sandy cooking pot 1 WW01 S. Staffs Whiteware 1 SLIPCO Slip-coated ware 5 BW01 Buff-Whiteware
028		Pottery	1/13g	1 CW Coarseware jar fragment with internal and external neutral glaze
030		Pottery	13/420g	2 BITrans Blue Transfer-printed ware 2 CANEW Cane ware 2 MAJ Majolica 2 MGW Modern glazed ware 5 UTW Utilitarian whiteware
030		CBM		Roof tile
040		Clay pipe	4/10g	Stems
040		Leather	1/5g	Shoe part
040		Pottery	13/136g	1 WEDN Wednesbury ware 3 BLW Blackware 1 YW Yellow ware 2 CW Coarseware 5 SLPW Combed slipware

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				1 SLPW Trailed slipware
040		CBM	9/1825g	2 Handmade brick frag 3 Handmade roof tile- 1 with animal paw print 4 unidentifiable fragments
046		Pottery	3/189g	3 CPJC01 Coarse sandy cooking pot
048		Pottery	1/12g	Post-medieval with green glaze
102		Glass	2/22g	1 green bottle fragment, 1 clear green vessel fragment
102		brick	4/ 9860g	1 8cmx11cmx24cm with "Hawkins Colliery"-5.01kg 1 15cmx5cmx>10cm 0.7kg 1 5cmx>8cmx>4cm 0.095kg 1 11cmx7.5cmx23cm with "Utopia" 3.875kg
102		Clay pipe	1/5g	Stem fragment
102		Animal Bone	1/1g	Chicken humerus fragment
102		Pottery	11/33g	1 WSG Post-medieval white salt-glazed stoneware 1 CRW Post-medieval creamware 2 BITrans Blue transfer printed ware 1 FLOWB Flow Blue? 2 UTW Utilitarian whiteware 1 PORC Porcelain 3 CANEW Cane ware
110		Pottery	4/75g	4 BW01 Medieval buff-whiteware
114		Pottery	2/6g	1 CPJC01 Coarse sandy cooking pot 1 CPJC01 Sandy cooking pot
114		Animal bone	3/8g	2 Medium mammal rib fragments butchered 1 medium mammal vertebra fragment

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115		Animal bone	3/8g	Unidentifiable fragments
115		Pottery	8/186	8 CPJC01 Coarse sandy cooking pot
204		Pottery	6/357g	5 CW Coarseware 1 PLW Pearlware
205		Pottery	1/24g	1 CW Coarseware
205		Animal bone	1/82g	Cattle astragalus
304		Pottery	7/90g	1 WEDN Wednesbury ware 4 BLW Blackware 2 CW Coarseware
304		Animal Bone	3/21g	1 sheep tooth 2 medium mammal long bone fragments
304		Tile	2/78g	Handmade roof tile fragments
405		Pottery	1/5g	1 Slipco post-medieval slip-coated ware
804		Pottery	1/12g	1 CW Coarseware
909		Pottery	2/101g	1 INDSLPW Industrial slipware 1 STWbuff Buff stoneware
909		Animal Bone	1/141g	Cattle rib shaft fragment butchered one end and gnawed opposite end
911		Pottery	1/57g	1 STWgrey Grey stoneware
912		Pottery	8/95g	1 CANEW Cane ware 7 Bltrans Blue transfer-printed ware
920		Pottery	3/20g	1 UTW Utilitarian white ware 1 PARN? Parian ware? 1 STWbuff Buff stoneware
922		Pottery	2/6g	1 INDSLPW Industrial slipware 1 BrTrans Brown transfer-printed ware
922		Tile	2/66g	Handmade roof tile fragments
922		Animal Bone	1/1g	Fish vertebra
018	018	Brick	1/3995g	8.5cmx11cmx24.5cm
019	019	Brick	1/3490g	23.5cmx6.5cmx11.5cm
28	28	Brick	1/2195g	7.5cmx11.5cmx>13cm

Summary for archaeol27-514030

OASIS ID (UID)	archaeol27-514030
Project Name	Revolution Park, Wednesfield, Wolverhampton: Excavation
Sitename	Revolution Park, Wednesfield, Wolverhampton
Activity type	Strip Map And Sample
Project Identifier(s)	WW22 mitigation
Planning Id	21/00947/FUL
Reason For Investigation	Planning: Post determination
Organisation Responsible for work	Archaeology Warwickshire
Project Dates	01-Sep-2022 - 31-Oct-2022
Location	Revolution Park, Wednesfield, Wolverhampton NGR : SO 95180 99810 LL : 52.5960619839276, -2.07259064448147 12 Fig : 395180,299810
Administrative Areas	Country : England County : West Midlands District : Wolverhampton Parish : Wolverhampton, unparished area

Project Methodology	<p>The main aim of the work was to expose and record any significant archaeological deposits revealed by the development, to collate the fieldwork records into an archaeological archive and present the results of the fieldwork for dissemination.</p> <p>The research aims in the WSI were:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Is it a moat? o When was it created? o To establish the presence and nature of any medieval remains o Does any evidence survive of Merrill's Hall? o Is it possible to date the establishment of the hall? <p>The excavation area covered c. 2,120 square metres of concrete and tarmac surfaces; where possible this and any demonstrably modern overburden were removed by machine using a breaker and toothless bucket under direct archaeological supervision. Ground reduction then continued in shallow spits until the uppermost archaeological horizon, or the geological natural was reached (Fig 6: Photo 1). Care was taken to uncover and record 20th century industrial remains, meaning that in places the stripping of site was undertaken in two phases.</p> <p>During the initial ground clearance it became apparent that the eastern portion of the site was covered by a 1m thick reinforced concrete slab, impossible to remove in the course of the commissioned excavation. Therefore, it was agreed that a watching brief would be maintained during its removal during the remediation works across the site. In the event, it was decided by the main site contractor that the formation levels required in this part of the site did not exceed the depth of archaeology and therefore the large slab was not to be removed. The watching brief was therefore confined to small areas of the site and the excavation of a new service trench.</p> <p>An experienced archaeologist was present for each period of ground disturbance when notified by the client's contractor in accordance with the WSI, which included the excavation of the new service trench through the eastern edge of the site. This revealed the southern edge of the moat, but any other archaeological remains that may have been present had been removed or heavily disturbed by previous works.</p> <p>The work was carried out in accordance with Chartered Institute for Archaeologists Standard and guidance for archaeological excavation (2020) and a Written Scheme of Investigation (Child 2022) agreed by the Archaeological Advisor to the Local Planning Authority.</p>
Project Results	<p>A relative lack of 15th – 17th century finds suggests a lack of intensive use between the medieval period and construction of Merrill's Hall. The moat was further investigated and was again found to exclusively contain 19th to 20th century infill deposits containing brick rubble and debris deposited to fill the moat as part of the early 20th century industrial development of the site. No evidence was recovered to suggest the moat ever formed a complete circuit around the hall and it is possible that it was originally dug in an L-shaped plan and intended as a decorative feature.</p> <p>Brick-built walls, floors and sub-floors associated with the former industrial buildings of the Weldless Steel Tube Works were recorded in the southern excavation area.</p> <p>The results were generally consistent with the potential for medieval, post-medieval, and modern remains to be present on the site, as highlighted in a previous Desk-Based Assessment. They have also shown that the 20th century industrial development and clearance across the site resulted in comprehensive removal and damage to the remains of Merrill's Hall and its grounds.</p>
Keywords	<p>Gully - MEDIEVAL - FISH Thesaurus of Monument Types</p> <p>Building - POST MEDIEVAL - FISH Thesaurus of Monument Types</p> <p>Moat - POST MEDIEVAL - FISH Thesaurus of Monument Types</p> <p>Ditch - POST MEDIEVAL - FISH Thesaurus of Monument Types</p> <p>Sherd - MEDIEVAL - FISH Archaeological Objects Thesaurus</p> <p>Sherd - POST MEDIEVAL - FISH Archaeological Objects Thesaurus</p> <p>Sherd - 20TH CENTURY - FISH Archaeological Objects Thesaurus</p>

Funder	
HER	Wolverhampton and Walsall HER - unRev - STANDARD
Person Responsible for work	Adam, Griffiths, Anna, Szulfer
HER Identifiers	
Archives	Digital Archive - to be deposited with Archaeology Data Service Archive; Physical Archive, Documentary Archive - to be deposited with Archives: no repository;



ARCHAEOLOGY
WARWICKSHIRE

Revolution Park, Steelpark Way, Wednesfield, Wolverhampton

ARCHAEOLOGICAL EXCAVATION: STRIP, MAP AND RECORD

March 2023

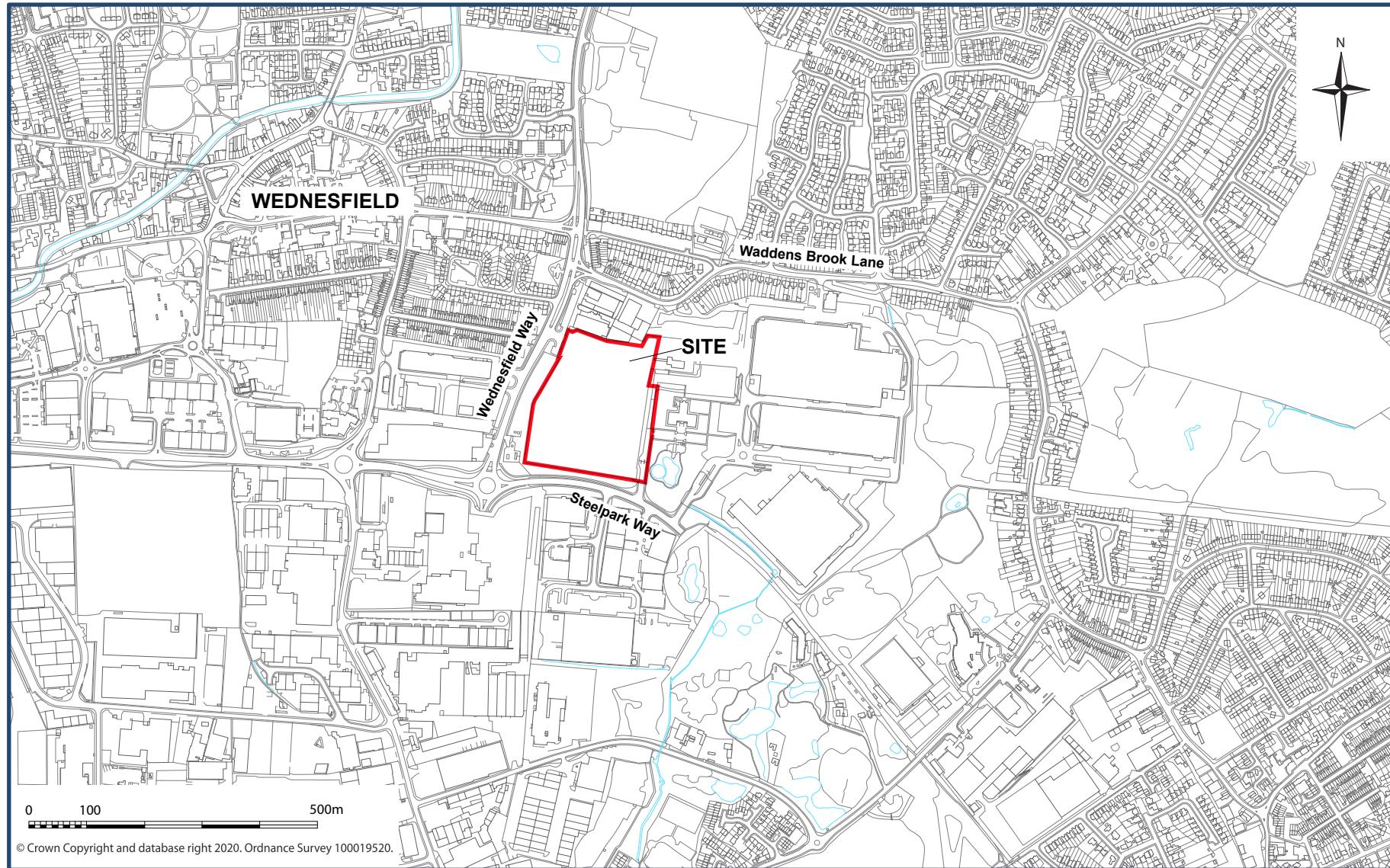


Fig 1: Location of site



ARCHAEOLOGY
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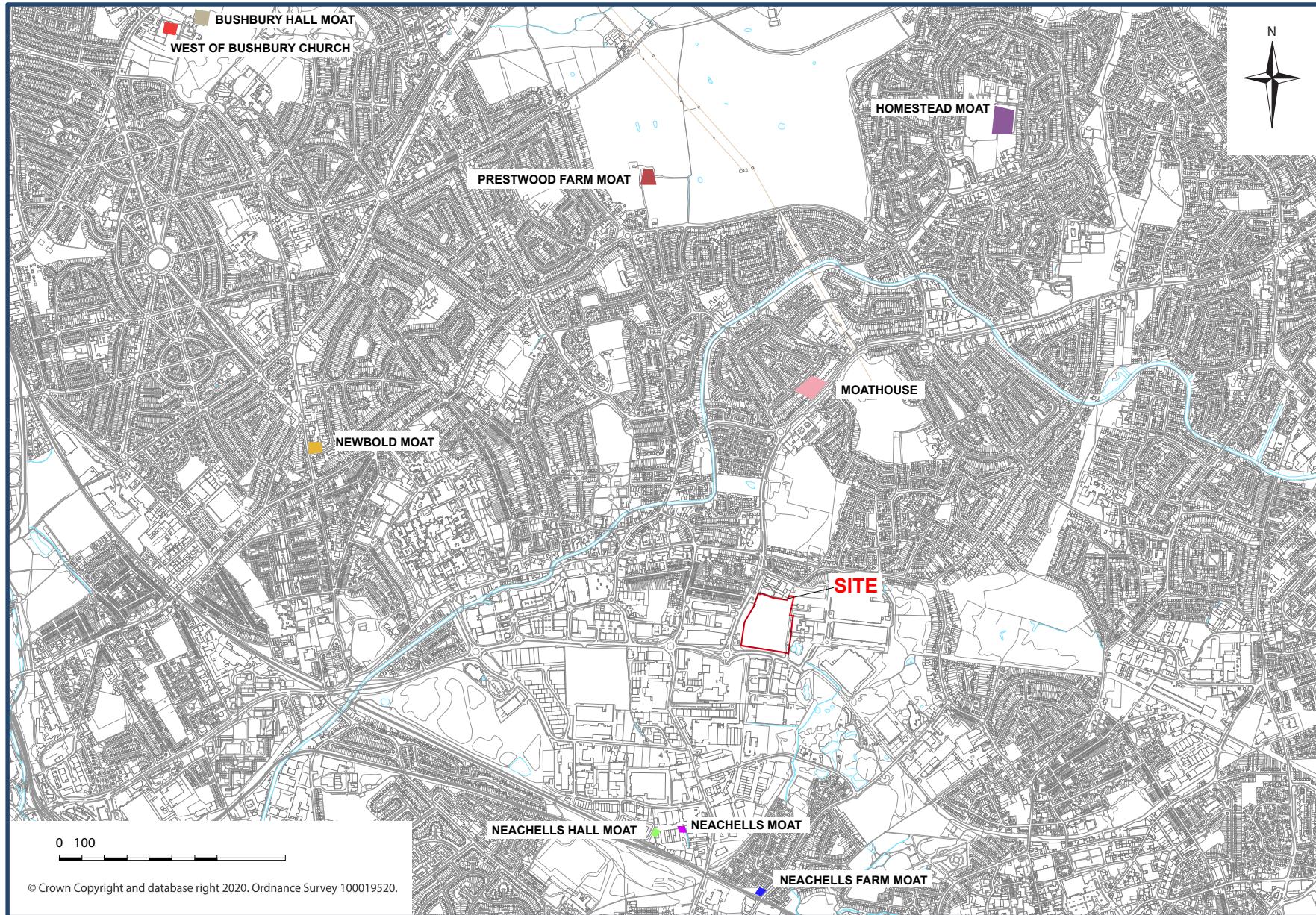


Fig 2: Location of site and other known moated enclosures in the area



Revolution Park, Steelpark Way, Wednesfield, Wolverhampton

ARCHAEOLOGICAL EXCAVATION: STRIP, MAP AND RECORD

March 2023

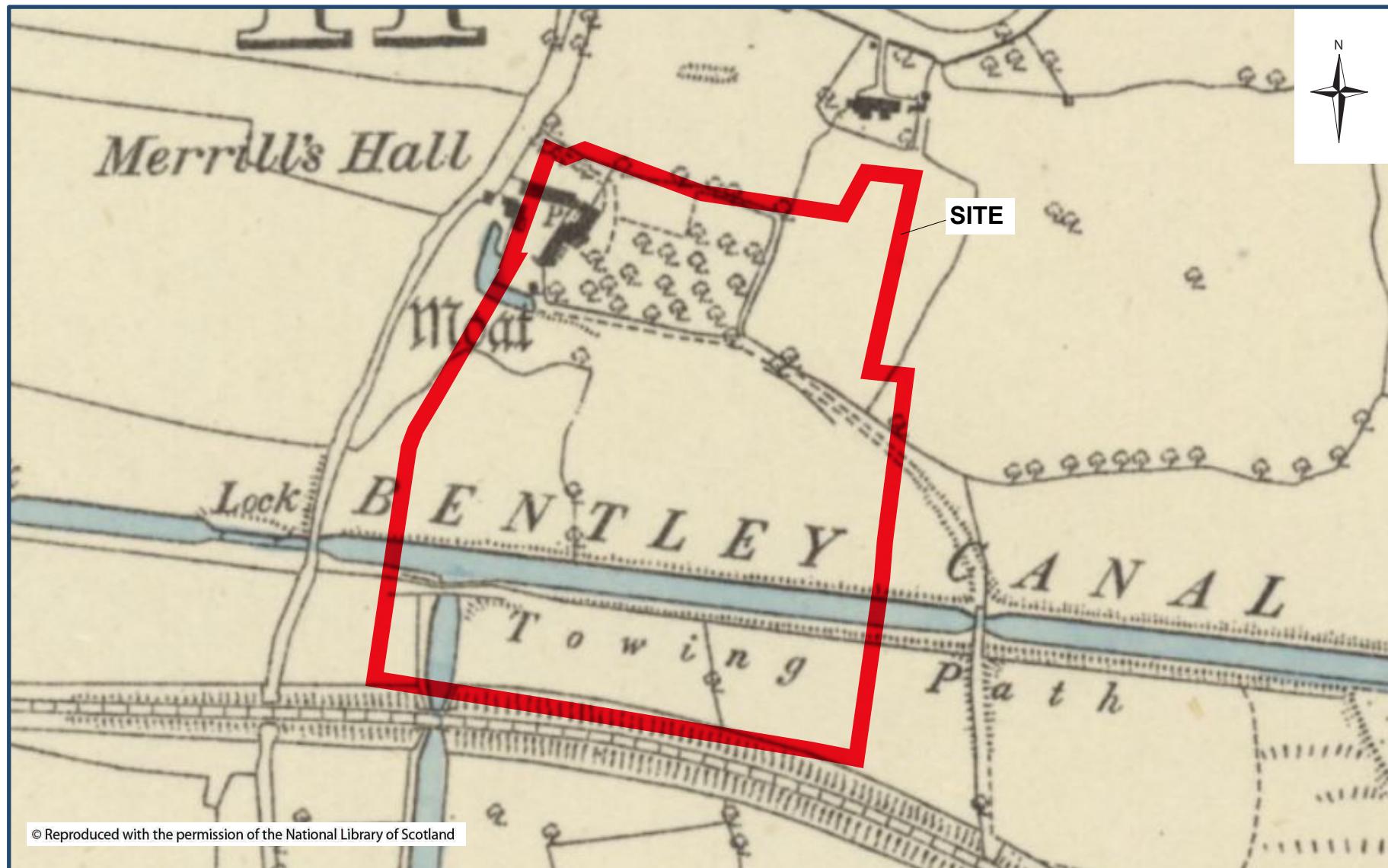
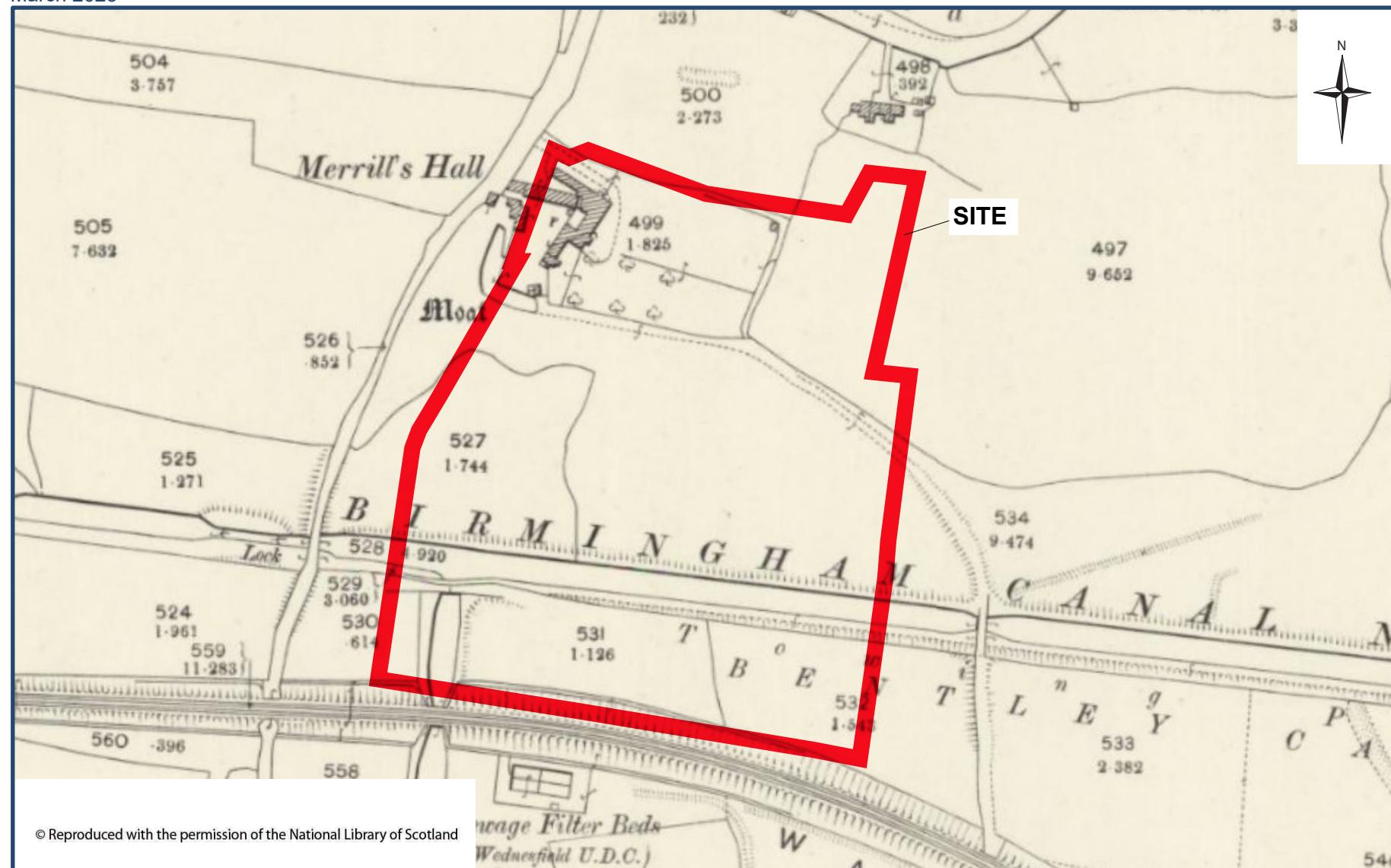


Fig 3: Detail from First Edition Ordnance Survey 6 inch map of 1886 (Staffordshire LXII NE)

Revolution Park, Steelpark Way, Wednesfield, Wolverhampton

ARCHAEOLOGICAL EXCAVATION: STRIP, MAP AND RECORD

March 2023



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Fig 4: Detail from Ordnance Survey 1:2500 map of 1902 (Staffordshire LXII 8)

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March 2023

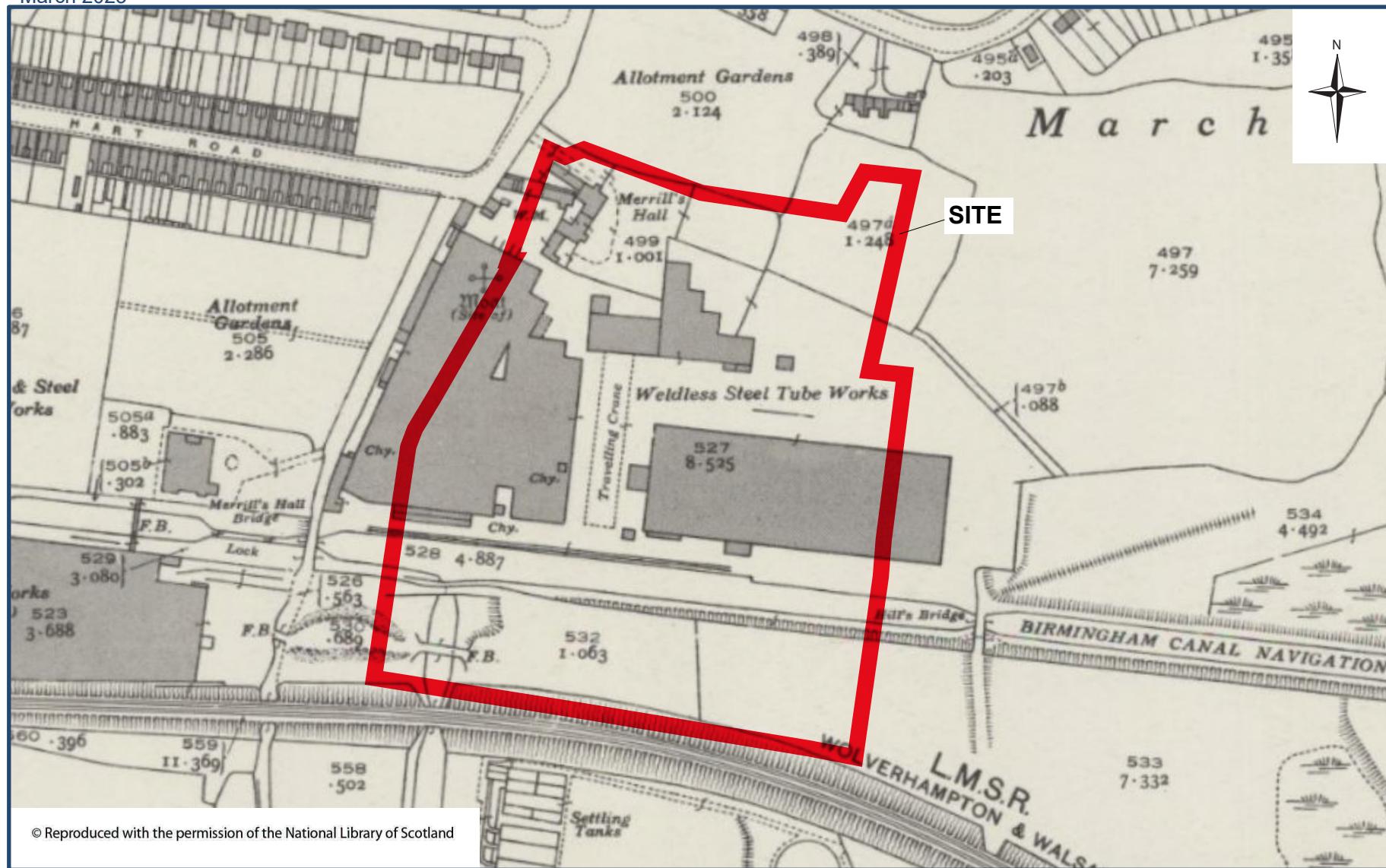


Fig 5: Detail from Ordnance Survey 1:2500 map of 1947 (Staffordshire LXII 8)

Revolution Park, Steelpark Way, Wednesfield, Wolverhampton

ARCHAEOLOGICAL EXCAVATION: STRIP, MAP AND RECORD

March 2023

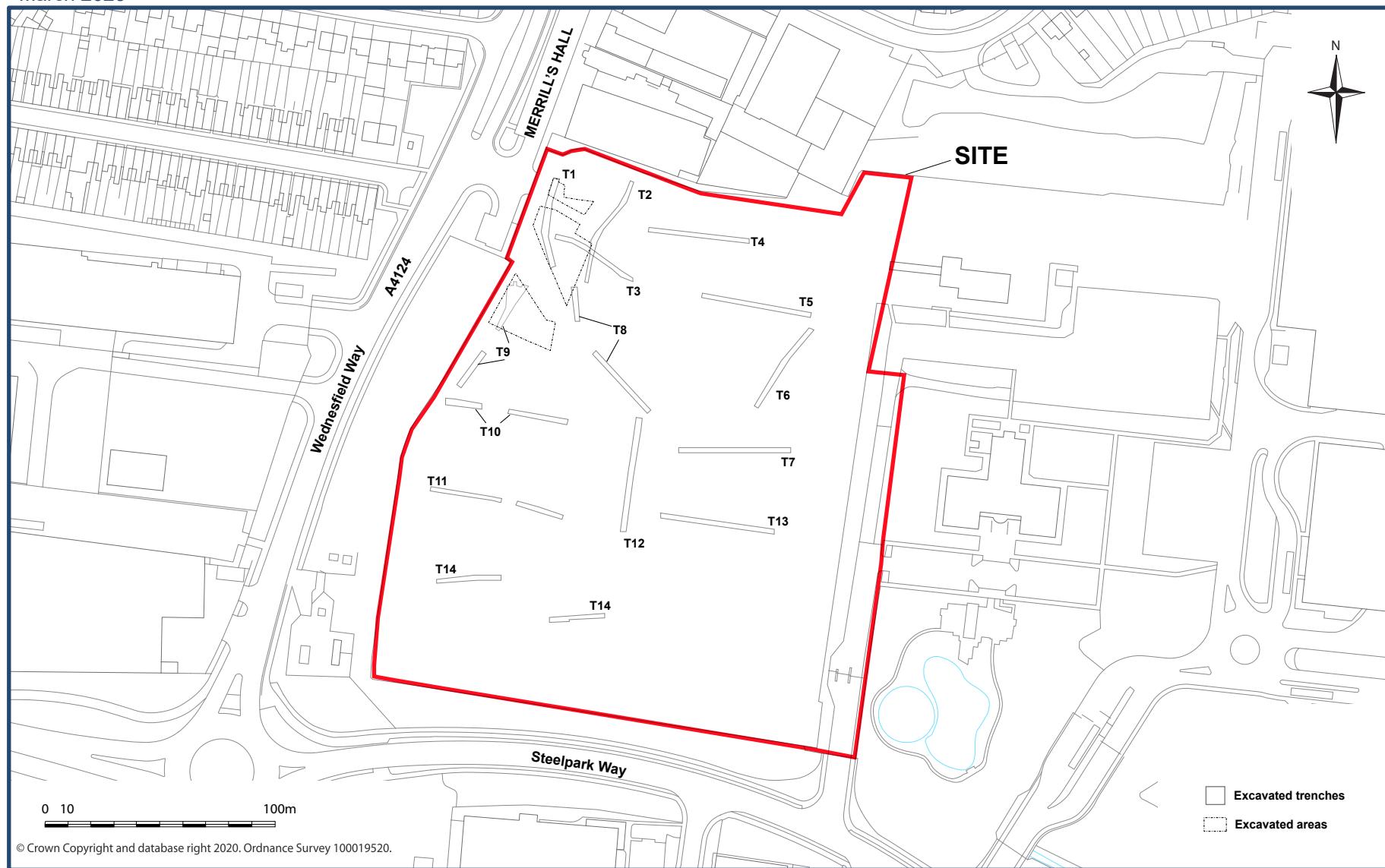


Fig 6: Excavation areas and evaluation trenches

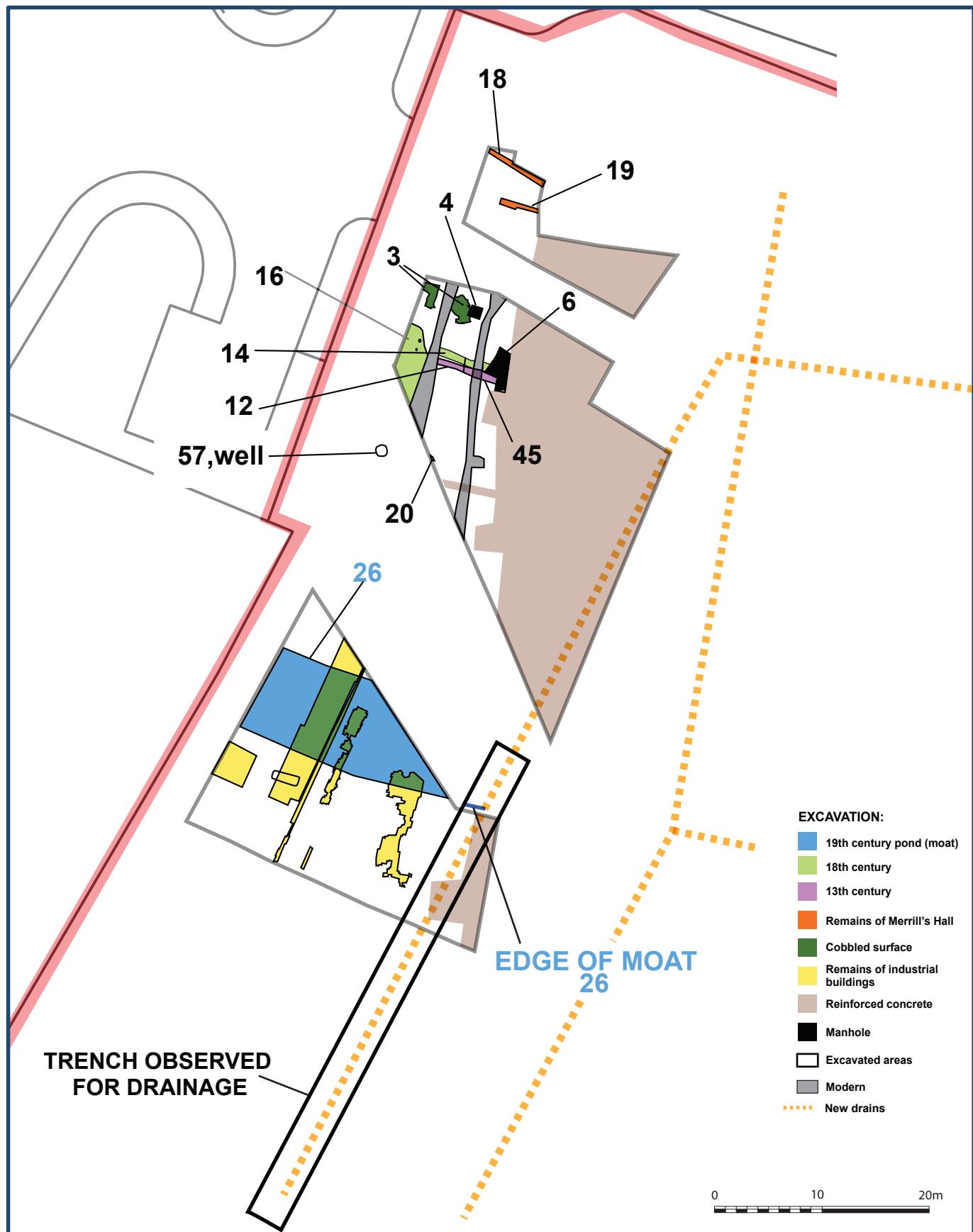


Fig 7: Detail of excavation area

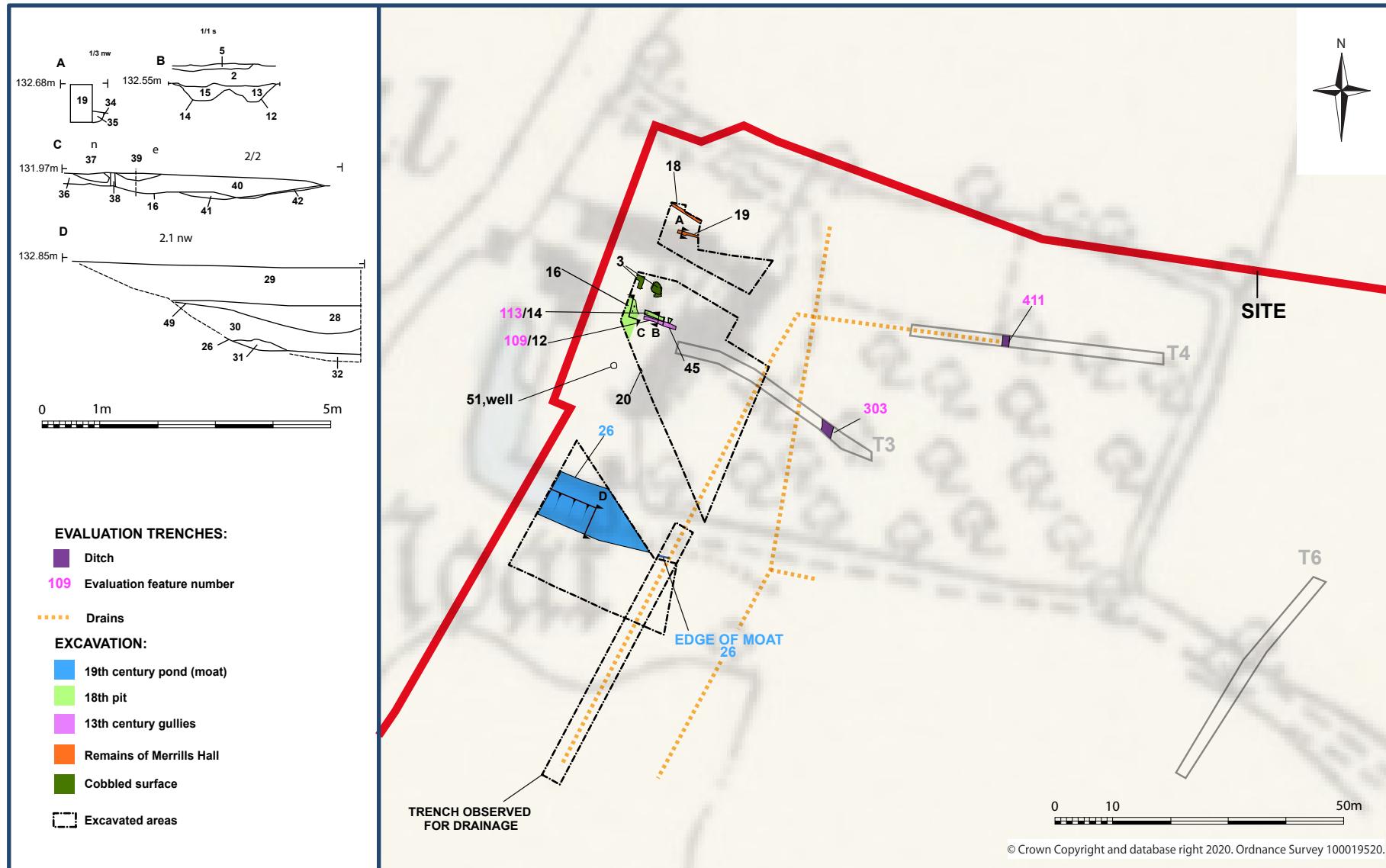


Fig 8: Location of features, sections and 1886 Ordnance Survey Mapping