



Ivy House Mills, Commercial Road, Hanley, Stoke-on-Trent

Archaeological Watching Brief Final Report



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Seddon Construction Ltd

Planning Application SOT/54550

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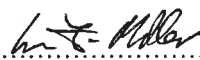
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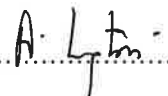
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SUMMARY

Seddon Construction Ltd has obtained planning consent for the redevelopment of a c 1.37ha site off Commercial Road in Hanley, Stoke-on-Trent (centred on NGR SJ 89085 47274). The development proposals allow for the erection of 62 dwellings, an electrical sub-station and associated infrastructure, which will inevitably necessitate earth-moving works (Planning Application SOT/54550).

The south-eastern part of the site was occupied in the nineteenth century by the Ivy House Paper Mills, and the western part by Dresden Mills, which ground flint and bone and produced colours for the pottery industry. By the 1930s, Dresden Mills had fallen into disuse, and its site was subsumed by an expansion of Ivy House Mill. This industrial complex was eventually demolished in 2006-07, and geo-technical investigations carried out subsequently indicated that there was a low potential for buried archaeological remains to survive across the southern part of the site. However, the archaeological potential of the north-eastern part of the site, which was occupied by a row of workers' housing from at least 1866 to 1937, remained unknown.

In order to secure these archaeological interests, and following consultation with the Planning Archaeologist in his capacity as archaeological advisor to Stoke-on-Trent City Council, the Local Planning Authority attached a condition to planning consent for the proposed development. This condition required an archaeological watching brief to be maintained during earth-moving works necessitated by the proposed construction programme, in accordance with a Design Brief supplied by the Planning Archaeologist. The watching brief was targeted on the footprint of the row of domestic structures and their back plots in the north-eastern part of the development site. The work was undertaken in accordance with a Written Scheme of Investigation, which was devised by OA North and approved by the Planning Archaeologist, and was carried out in January and February 2014.

The results obtained from the watching brief have demonstrated that the nineteenth-century workers' housing within the development area was almost entirely destroyed during the redevelopment of the site in the second half of the twentieth century. The only potential survival was represented by the fragmentary remains of a brick floor, which may have formed a surface in the rear room and covered passageway for the northernmost house. However, there was no evidence for the wall of the house, which will have separated the internal floor of the house from that of the covered passage, suggesting that the floor may actually have represented part of the building that occupied the site in the second half of the twentieth century. The remains of three walls were exposed during the watching brief, although these seemingly represented a building that was erected on the site in the second half of the twentieth century. The fabric of these walls comprised machine-pressed bricks, set in cement-based mortar, consistent with a twentieth-century date. The wall foundations, moreover, comprised a narrow raft of concrete, further testifying their late construction date. No artefacts were recovered from the watching brief.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Oxford Archaeology North (OA North) is grateful to Keiron Morely of Seddon Construction Ltd for commissioning and supporting the project. OA North is also grateful to Jon Goodwin, the Planning Archaeologist for Stoke-on-Trent City Council, for his advice and consultation.

The watching brief was undertaken by Andy Phelps and Jon Onraet. The report was compiled by Andy Phelps, and the drawings were prepared by Mark Tidmarsh. The report was edited by Ian Miller, who was also responsible for project management.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 CIRCUMSTANCES OF THE PROJECT

- 1.1.1 A planning application has been submitted to Stoke-on-Trent City Council for the redevelopment of a c 1.37ha site off Commercial Road in Hanley, Stoke-on-Trent (Planning Application SOT/54550). The development proposals allow for the erection of 62 dwellings, an electrical sub-station and associated infrastructure, which will inevitably necessitate earth-moving works.
- 1.1.2 The south-eastern part of the proposed development site was occupied from the early nineteenth century by the Ivy House Paper Mills, which was established in 1827 for the manufacture of tissue paper for transfer-printing in the pottery industry, as well as ordinary paper. By the mid-nineteenth century, the western part of the site was occupied by Dresden Mills, which ground flint and bone and produced colours for the pottery industry. This mill fell into disuse in the early twentieth century and, following demolition in the late 1920s/early 1930s, the site was subsumed by an expansion of Ivy House Mills. By that date, paper making had been transferred to mills at Cheddleton, and manufacturing operations at Ivy House Mills had been given over to paper coating and finishing (Scott Wilson 2007).
- 1.1.3 The Ivy House Mill complex was eventually demolished in 2006-07, and geo-technical investigations carried out subsequently have indicated that there is a low potential for buried archaeological remains to survive across the southern part of the site. However, the potential for buried remains of archaeological interest to survive across other parts of the site was unknown. In particular, the sequence of historical mapping shows that a row of workers' housing occupied the north-eastern quarter of the site from at least 1866 to 1937. These dwellings were replaced by a factory range after 1950, although it is possible that the foundations of these domestic structures may survive as buried remains, which would be of potential archaeological interest.
- 1.1.4 In order to secure these archaeological interests, and following consultation with the Planning Archaeologist in his capacity as archaeological advisor to Stoke-on-Trent City Council, the Local Planning Authority attached a condition to planning consent for the proposed development. This condition required an archaeological watching brief to be maintained during earth-moving works necessitated by the proposed construction programme. The scope of works required was specified in a Design Brief formulated by the Planning Archaeologist for Stoke-on-Trent City Council. In response to this Design Brief, OA North devised a Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI), in consultation with the Planning Archaeologist. The watching brief allowed for the monitoring of any earth-moving works required by the construction programme, including the excavation of foundations, service trenches, and the removal of modern hard surfacing, and was targeted on the footprint of the row of domestic structures and their back plots. Following formal approval of the WSI, the work was undertaken in January and February 2014.

1.2 SITE LOCATION

- 1.2.1 The development site lies in Hanley, Stoke-on-Trent (Fig 1). It occupies a plot of land bounded to the north by Commercial Road, and to the south by the Caldon Canal in Hanley (centred on NGR SJ 89085 47274). Most of the site comprises hard surfacing left from the demolition of the Ivy House Mills (Plate 1).



Plate 1: Recent aerial view of the study area, prior to the commencement of the present development programme, with arrow marking the location of the former workers' housing that formed the focus of the archaeological watching brief

2. METHODOLOGY

2.1 WATCHING BRIEF

- 2.1.1 The watching brief allowed for the location, extent, and character of any surviving archaeological features and/or deposits exposed during ground disturbance across the north-eastern part of the development area to be recorded accurately. This work comprised observation during the earth-moving works required by the construction programme, including building foundations and service trenches, the systematic examination of any subsoil horizons, and the accurate recording of all archaeological features and horizons, and any artefacts, identified during observation.

2.2 ARCHIVE

- 2.2.1 A full archive of the work has been prepared to a professional standard in accordance with current English Heritage guidelines (1991) and the *Guidelines for the Preparation of Excavation Archives for Long Term Storage* (UKIC 1990). The archive will be deposited with the Potteries Museum and Art Gallery in Hanley, Stoke-on-Trent, and the material has been allocated a unique archive accession number (2013.LH.34).

3. BACKGROUND

3.1 WORKERS' HOUSING

3.1.1 The archaeological watching brief was targeted on the footprint of a row of workers' houses that formerly occupied the north-eastern part of the development site. The precise date at which the houses were erected is uncertain, although cartographic evidence indicates that they were in existence by 1866. The detailed Ordnance Survey maps of 1879-80 and 1890 (Plate 2) show the row to have comprised a terrace of six properties, situated immediately to the north of the Dresden Mills complex. The form of the buildings shown on the historical mapping suggests that they were double-depth properties, comprising a front and rear room, and were probably of two storeys in height. The absence of any cellar lights suggests that the houses did not have basements.

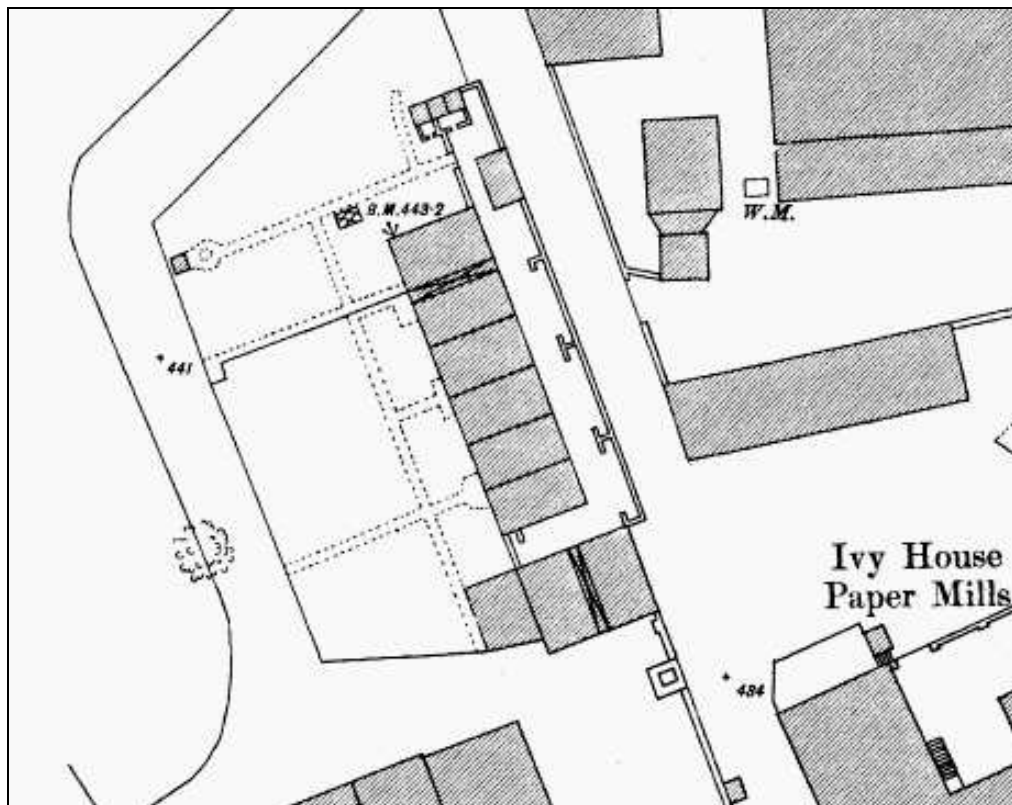


Plate 2: Detail of the workers' housing shown on the Ordnance Survey 1:500 map of 1890

3.1.2 The west-facing elevation of the houses is likely to have incorporated the front entrance, with a common yard area to the rear. Access to the rear of the houses was seemingly afforded via a gate at the southern end of the terrace, and a covered passageway between the first and second house at the northern end. A block of small structures occupying the common yard area a short distance to the north of the houses is likely to have represented shared privies. The footprint of the houses remains unchanged on subsequent editions of Ordnance Survey mapping (Plate 3).

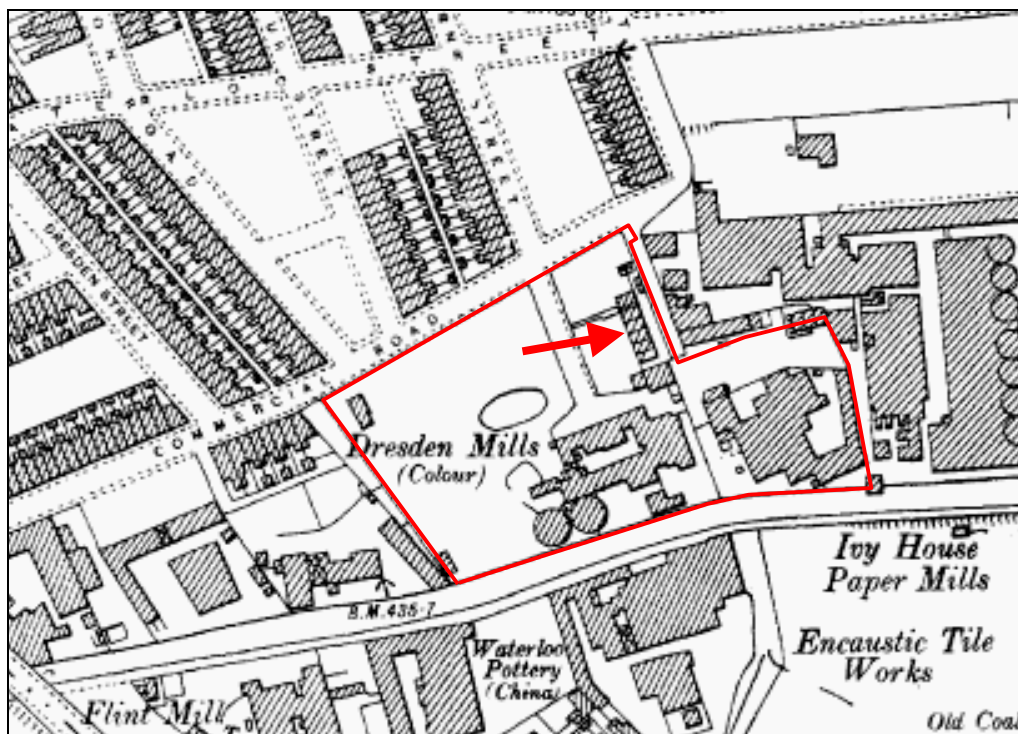


Plate 3: Boundary of the development area, superimposed on the Ordnance Survey map of 1900, with arrow marking the position of the workers' housing

3.1.3 The buildings appear on historical mapping into the mid-twentieth century. However, maps published in 1952 and 1966 just mark the outline of the complete row, rather than individual houses, suggesting that they were no longer used as dwellings, or had been replaced by a modern factory range.

4. SUMMARY OF RESULTS

4.1 INTRODUCTION

- 4.1.1 The archaeological works carried out at the Ivy House Mills site comprised the close monitoring of earth-moving works in the vicinity of the nineteenth-century workers' housing that had formerly occupied the north-eastern part of the development area. The work was undertaken in January and February 2014. The following section summarises the results obtained from the work.
- 4.1.2 Prior to the commencement of the archaeological works, the site of the houses lay partially beneath modern hard-standing that had formed an access route into the former industrial complex. In the first instance, archaeological monitoring was maintained during the removal of this hard-standing to reveal the rear portion of the former houses. The footprint of the front portion of the houses lay beneath a spoil heap, the removal of which formed a second stage to the archaeological watching brief.



Plate 4: The site of the workers' housing prior to the commencement of any earth-moving works required by the construction programme

4.2 WATCHING BRIEF

- 4.2.1 The removal of the hard-standing overlying the eastern part of the former houses exposed the foundations of two brick-built walls (Fig 2), which were revealed at a depth of 0.10m below the modern ground surface. Both walls were aligned broadly north/south, and were set 0.65m apart. The position of the easternmost wall corresponded with the rear wall of the houses shown on historical mapping (Fig 2), whilst the western wall lay within the footprint of the former buildings. The fragmentary remains of an east/west-aligned return wall were also exposed at the southern end of the houses.
- 4.2.2 The westernmost wall was 0.34m thick, and survived to a maximum height of 0.82m (Plate 5). The fabric of the wall comprised machine-pressed bricks that were bonded in a cement-based mortar, indicative of a twentieth-century construction date. This late construction date was corroborated by a thin raft of concrete, which provided a foundation for the wall.
- 4.2.3 The western wall was keyed into the fragmentary remains of an east/west-aligned wall, the position of which corresponded broadly with the southern end wall of the nineteenth-century houses (Fig 2). However, the exposed wall was 0.82m thick, and was similarly laid upon a concrete foundation, indicating that it was almost certainly of a twentieth-century date (Plate 6).
- 4.2.4 The fabric of the easternmost wall exposed during the watching brief also comprised machine-made bricks bonded with cement-based mortar, and similarly lay on a foundation raft of concrete. The wall was 0.23m thick, but only survived to a maximum height of two courses.
- 4.2.5 The fragmentary remains of an internal floor, covering an area of maximum dimensions of 3.5 x 1.3m, was exposed immediately to the west of the walls (Plate 7). The fabric of this floor comprised 'Victorian Blue' bricks. The eastern edge of the surface was abutted by a concrete surface, whilst the western edge had been destroyed during modern demolition works.
- 4.2.6 The footprint of the front portion of the former houses was investigated during a second-stage of works, which monitored the removal of a spoil heap and subsequent earth-moving works. This revealed a thick deposit of modern made ground to a depth of at least 3m (Plate 8). No physical remains of the nineteenth-century houses survived *in-situ*.
- 4.2.7 No artefacts were recovered from either stage of the watching brief.



Plate 5: The westernmost wall exposed during the watching brief



Plate 6: The remains of an east/west-aligned wall set on a concrete foundation



Plate 7: The remains of the internal floor



Plate 8: Made ground revealed across the footprint of the front portion of the former houses

5. DISCUSSION

5.1 WATCHING BRIEF

- 5.1.1 The results obtained from the watching brief have demonstrated that the nineteenth-century workers' housing within the development area was almost entirely destroyed during the redevelopment of the site in the second half of the twentieth century. The only potential survival was represented by the fragmentary remains of a brick floor, which may have formed a surface in the rear room and covered passageway for the northernmost house. However, there was no evidence for the wall of the house, which will have separated the internal floor of the house from that of the covered passage. This suggests that the floor may actually have represented part of the building that occupied the site in the second half of the twentieth century.
- 5.1.2 The remains of three walls were exposed during the watching brief. The fabric of these walls comprised machine-pressed bricks, set in cement-based mortar, consistent with a twentieth-century date. The wall foundations, moreover, comprised a narrow raft of concrete, further testifying their late construction date.

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ILLUSTRATIONS

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1: Site location

Figure 2: Features observed during the watching brief, superimposed on the Ordnance Survey map of 1880

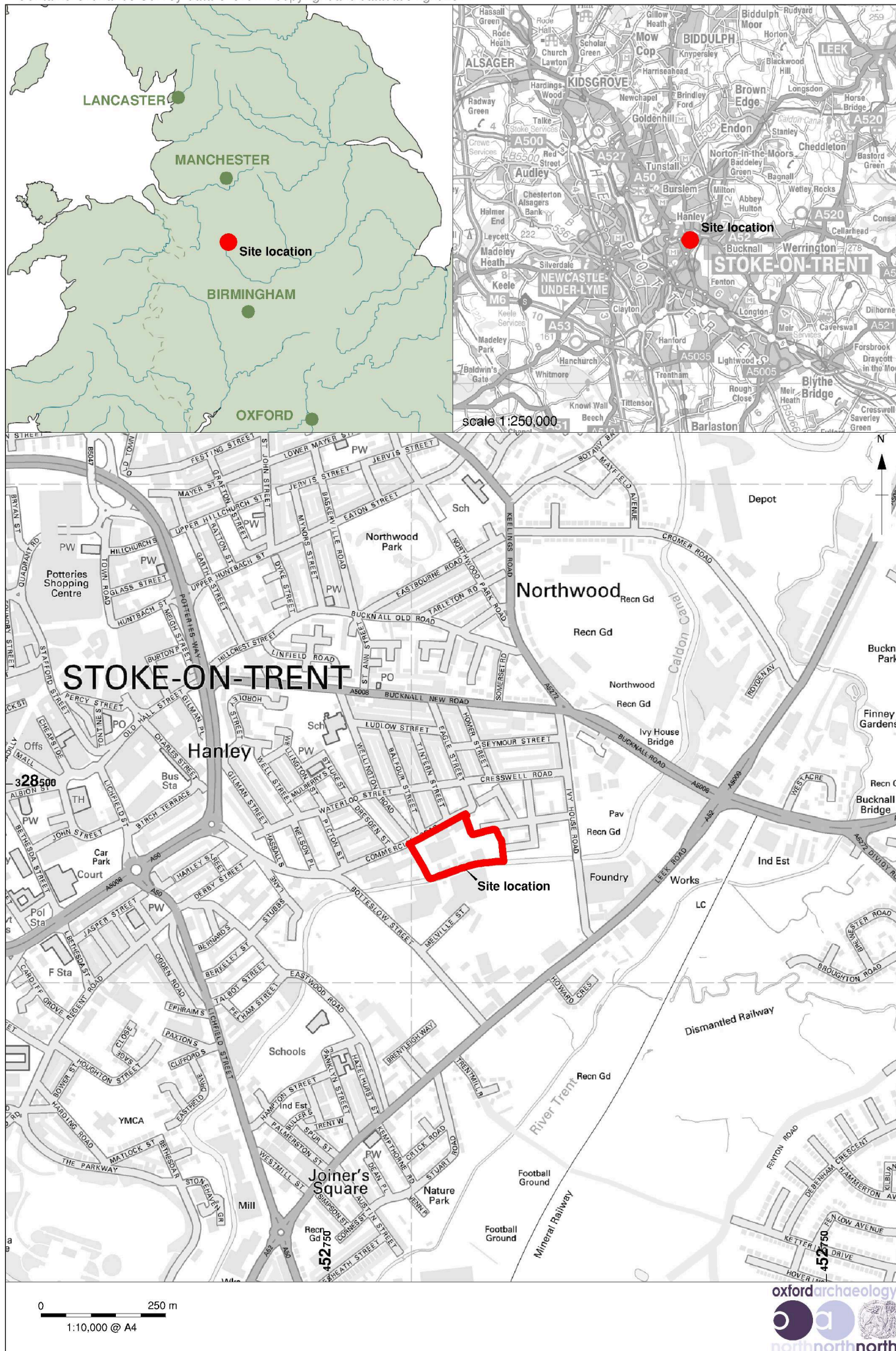


Figure 1: Site location

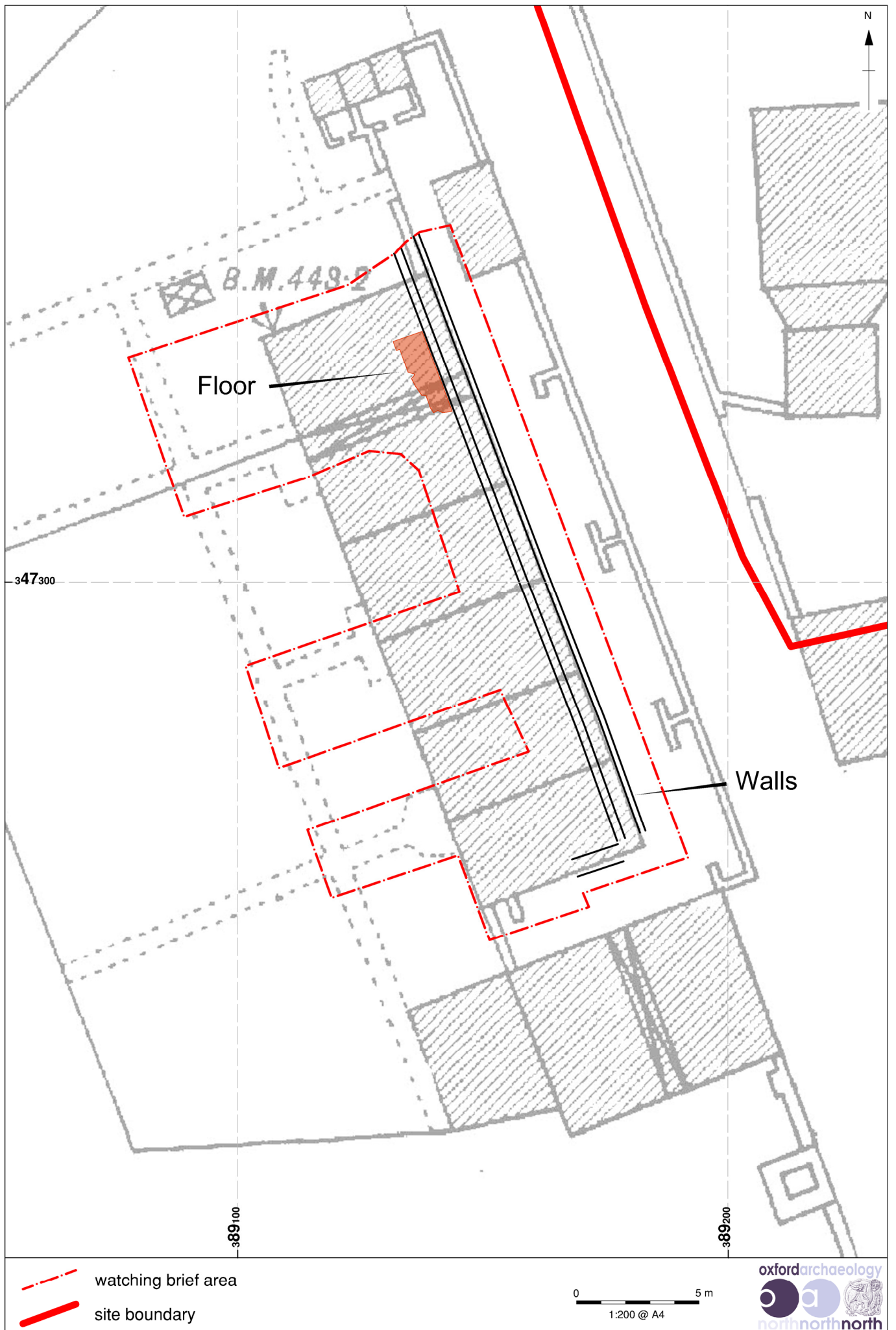


Figure 2: Features observed during watching brief, superimposed on the Ordnance Survey map of 1880

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