T V A S

SOUTH WEST

5 St. Margaret's Street, Bradford-on-Avon, Wiltshire

Archaeological Evaluation

by Nicholas Dawson

Site Code: MSB23/219

(ST 8257 6083)

5 St Margaret's Street, Bradford-on-Avon, Wiltshire

An Archaeological Evaluation

For Armour Heritage

by Nicholas Dawson

TVAS South West

Site Code MSB 23/219

January 2024

Summary

Site name: 5 Margaret's Street, Bradford-on-Avon, Wiltshire

Grid reference: ST 8257 6083

Site activity: Evaluation

Date and duration of project: 3rd January 2024

Project manager: Agata Socha-Paszkiewicz

Site supervisor: Nicholas Dawson

Site code: MSB 23/219

Area of site: 0.05ha

Summary of results: A single trench was opened as intended, however given its location within a now demolished structure the area was heavily disturbed. No finds or features of archaeological interest were encountered.

Location and reference of archive: The archive is presently held at TVAS South West, Taunton and will be deposited with the Archaeology Data Service in due course.

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5 St Margaret's Street, Bradford-on-Avon, Wiltshire
Archaeological Evaluation

by Nicholas Dawson

Report 23/219

Introduction

This report documents the results of an archaeological field evaluation carried out on land at 5 St Margaret's Street, Bradford-on-Avon, Wiltshire, BA15 1DA (ST 8257 6083) (Fig. 1). The work was commissioned by Ms Sue Farr of Armour Heritage Ltd, Foghamshire Timber Yard, Foghamshire Lane, Trudoxhill, Frome, Somerset BA11 5DG.

Planning permission (20/08674/FUL) is being sought from Wiltshire Council for alterations to the Grade II Listed Building (List Entry 1036104) including a loft conversion to create a single flat and the erection of three flats and associated landscaping in the property's rear garden. A field evaluation by means of single hand dug trench has been undertaken to determine the presence/absence, extent, significance and condition of any archaeological deposits within the area of development and to produce information to inform the planning process and to help formulate a mitigation strategy as necessary.

This is in accordance with the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities *National Planning Policy Framework* (NPPF 2023), and the Council's policies on archaeology. The field investigation was carried out to a specification approved by Mr Neil Adam, Assistant County Archaeologist for Wiltshire Council. The fieldwork was undertaken by Nicholas Dawson, Mariusz Paszkiewicz and Ruell Smith on 3rd January 2024 and the site code is MSB 23/219. The archive is presently held at TVAS South West, Taunton and will be deposited with the Archaeology Data Service in due course.

Location, topography and geology

The site is located at 5 St Margaret's Street, Bradford-on-Avon on the south side of the River Avon and in the town centre (Fig. 1). It consists of a rectangular plot of land some 0.05ha in size. Occupying the western end of site is the Grade II Listed building recorded as the *Liberal Club*, a two-storey building now housing a dentistry practice (Fig. 2). The remainder of the site is the rear garden of the property now heavily overgrown. To the north, east and south of the site are further properties and to the west St Margaret's Street. The site sits at an elevation of about 35m above Ordnance Datum (aOD) with an underlying geology is mapped as Fuller's Earth Formation (mudstone), with no superficial geological deposits recorded (BGS 2017).

Archaeological background

The archaeological potential of the site has been highlighted in a Heritage Impact Assessment (Armour Chelu 2020) and summarized in the Written Scheme of Investigation (Farr 2021). In brief there is little identified evidence for prehistoric activity within the area. A Mesolithic flint borer was recovered some 250m west of the site and a tranchet axe is unprovenanced from somewhere nearby. The closest evidence of prehistoric settlement is the (destroyed) hillfort at Budbury Hill 500m north-west of site where evidence of early Iron Age activity has been identified.

Evidence from the Roman period includes a villa site some 800m to the north-west in the grounds of St Laurence School where excavations revealed a bath house. The villa to which it belonged was later revealed in parchmarks and then investigated in recent excavation, revealing a large villa centred on a courtyard with well preserved mosaic floor (Corney 2003). Further findspots in the vicinity of the villa included pottery, glass, coins and isolated burials in stone coffins. Closer to the site a small collection of Roman coins was discovered in 1818 at The Priory, Market Street 200m to the north-west of site.

For the Medieval period the earliest record of the settlement at Bradford-on-Avon is recorded in the Anglo-Saxon Chronicles and later in Domesday Book of 1086 as belonging to the Abbey at Shaftsbury. The town appears to have grown steadily through the Medieval period with an economy based on the cloth trade. St Margaret's Street is thought to get its name from St Margaret's Hospital founded sometime around 1235 though its exact location is unknown.

By 1841 the Bradford-on-Avon tithe map shows 5 St Margaret's Street to be a private residence consisting of the house and gardens present within the modern-day boundary with further garden to the rear of the property.

By the 1887 Ordnance Survey (OS) First Edition map the house appears to have been remodelled and the garden plot to the rear shows formalized path and beds present. The 1901 OS map labels the site a *club* and the garden plot to the rear is now separated. Within the remaining narrow strip of garden containing a newly added building of unknown function. The remaining house is now Listed as the *Liberal Club* (List Entry 1036104) and the garden access as *Archway to left of Nos. 6 & 7 St. Margaret's Street* (List Entry 1184372).

Objectives and methodology

The purpose of the evaluation was to determine the presence/absence, extent, condition, character, quality and date of any archaeological deposits within the site.

Aims of the project are:

- to clarify the presence/absence and extent of any buried archaeological remains within the site that may be impacted by development;
- to identify, within the constraints of the evaluation, the date, condition and depth of any surviving remains within the site;
- to assess the degree of existing impacts to sub-surface horizons and to document the extent of archaeological survival of buried deposits; and
- to produce a report which will present the results of the evaluation in sufficient detail to allow an informed decision to be made concerning the sites archaeological potential and inform an archaeological mitigation strategy.

The potential and significance of any such deposits located were to be assessed according to research priorities such as those set out by Historic England (2017) or any more local or thematic research priorities as necessary (Webster 2008).

The initial methodology proposed the excavation of a single trench, measuring up to 6m in length by 1.0m wide, to target the area of greatest impact from the proposed development. Due to vehicular access constraints, excavation was be by hand to the surface of *in situ* subsoil/weathered natural or archaeological deposits whichever is highest in the stratigraphic sequence. Specifically, it was not to stop at the anticipated formation level if this is higher in the sequence to ensure a full understanding of the impact on any buried archaeology. Where appropriate, the base of the trench and the upper surface of any archaeological remains surviving within them were to be hand cleaned and surveyed to produce a plan of the arrangement of archaeological features across the trench. Archaeological features were to be sufficiently sampled to characterise and date them where practical, but full excavation of features was not to be undertaken at this stage.

Results

The single planned trench was located at the eastern end of the rear garden and was excavated as intended (Fig. 3; Pls 1–3). Orientated roughly west to east, the trench had a length of 6m, width of 1m and depth up to 0.1m. The stratigraphy of the trench consisted of between 0.04m and 0.1m of dark brown silty clay topsoil (50) with root disturbances, above the natural geology of light pale-yellow clay with mudstone inclusions.

No features or finds of archaeological interest were identified within the trench. On the ground surface within proximity of the trench a number of post-medieval pottery sherds, and a single fragment of medieval ceramic were identified.

It was noted during fieldwork that the terraced area in which the trench was located was some 12m by 4.5m. On the north, east and southern edges of the cut remains of walls from a demolished building were identified. Those to the north (51) and south (53) survived as footings and a small section of the bottom course of wall constructed of worked rectangular stonework of irregular sizes. The eastern wall (52) survives to a height of 2m and was formed of worked sandstone blocks of irregular sizes (Pl. 4). At its base covering an area of 4.99m by 1.38m was the remains of a concrete floor (54) the upper surface of which sat at a height of 35.81m aOD at its highest point, above the current ground level of 35.59m aOD where the evaluation trench was excavated. The debris from the demolished building remained in a pile covering a large proportion of the back garden of 5 St Margaret Street.

Finds

Pottery by Johnathan Davey

Seven sherds of pottery were taken as a sample of pottery found in the topsoil in the vicinity of the evaluation trench. Three pieces are underglazed blue porcelain with a Chinese style decoration. These weigh 83g in total, one appears to be a plate rim, one is the base to a larger dish, having a thick curved footing, while the other sherd is consistent with a cylindrical or bowl shaped vessel. All are late 18th to 20th century in date (Draper 1984, 52-53). One piece of terracotta orange pot weighing 25g is present, likely flowerpot, late post-medieval to modern in date. There is one sherd of green glazed pottery, consistent with Cistercian Ware, which weighs 56g. The sherd is likely from the base of a large, flat-based vessel, with this style of pottery dating from the 15th to the 17th century (Laing 2014, 108-109). The final sherd is from a handle of a vessel weighing 47g. There is a green splash glaze on the exterior, with a deep grove decoration within the curve of the handle. This is likely from a Medieval jug dating from the late 13th – 15th century (Laing 2014, 88-89).

Conclusion

The evaluation was successfully undertaken as intended with the single 6m by 1m trench reaching natural geology at depths not greater than 0.1m (Fig. 4), revealing no finds or features. The shallow depth of the natural and the lack of anything of archaeological interest within the evaluation trench could be due to the terracing of this section of hillside for the construction of a building. Historic mapping shows a building was constructed at some point between 1885 and 1899 as shown by its absences from the 1885 25 inch OS map and the building's presence on the 1899 25 inch OS. This has resulted in the removal of a section of the original hill slope up to depths of 2m and almost certainly destroying any archaeology that may have been present before the building's construction. The Town Plan (surveyed 1885, published 1887) (Fig. 5) shows steps leading down to the garden both from the house at the west and another access point towards the rear (east) of the garden from the north, with paths, which must have been more-or-less level, extending through the whole garden (and beyond). This suggests the entire garden was terraced to the same level at this time. Exactly when the demolition of the building was undertaken is harder to determine however it still appears on the 1961 1:10,560 OS map. The sample of surface finds recovered from the trench's vicinity appear consistent with those of an urban site consisting of largely post-medieval ceramic and a single medieval fragment. Given that the trench location has been heavily disturbed by this building it is hard to draw any conclusion as to the presence/absence and extent of any buried archaeological evidence within the rest of the site. Map evidence indicates that the whole would have been levelled but the fringe areas beyond the building footprint remain almost 2m higher today (Fig. 3; Pl. 2) so apparently this area has since been raised again. The site appears to have no archaeological potential.

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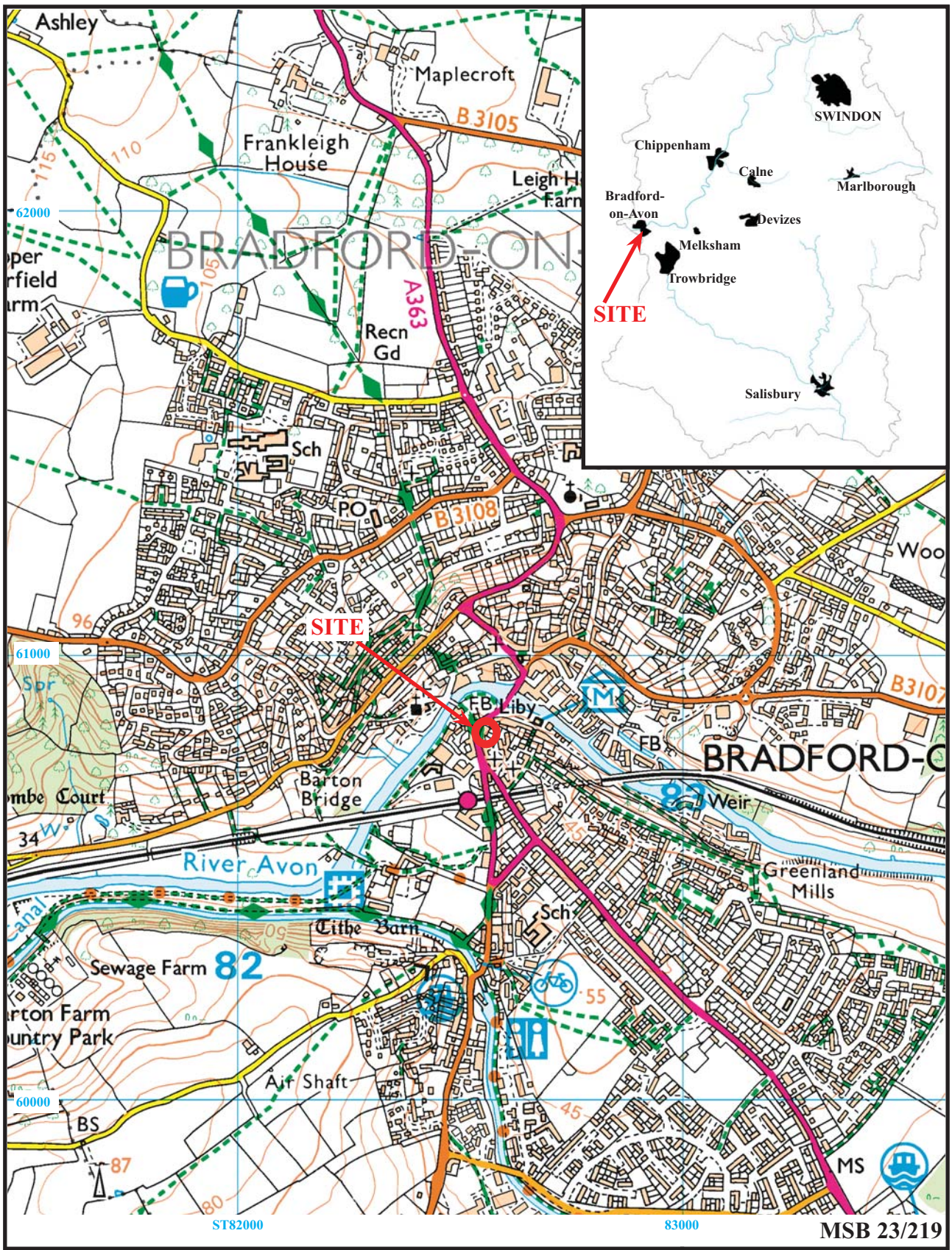
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APPENDIX 1: Trench details.

Trench	*Length (m)*	*Breadth (m)*	*Depth (m)*	*Comment*
1	6	1	0.1	0-0.1m Topsoil; 0.1m+ light pale-yellow clay natural geology with mudstone inclusions - natural geology. **[Pl. 1, 2 and 3]**



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Figure 1. Location of site within Bradford on Avon and Wiltshire.

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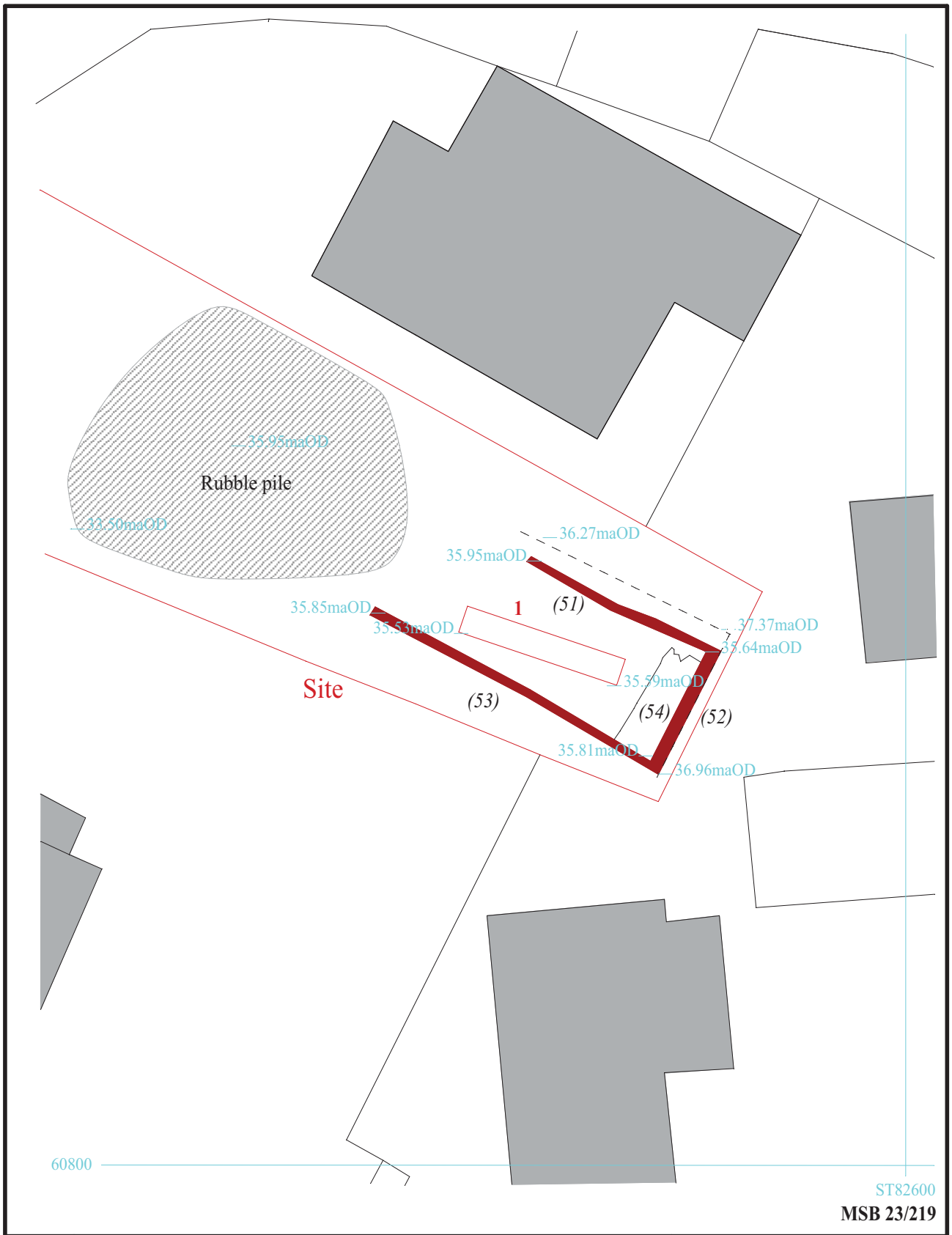
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Figure 2. Detailed location of site off St Margaret's Street.

0 50m

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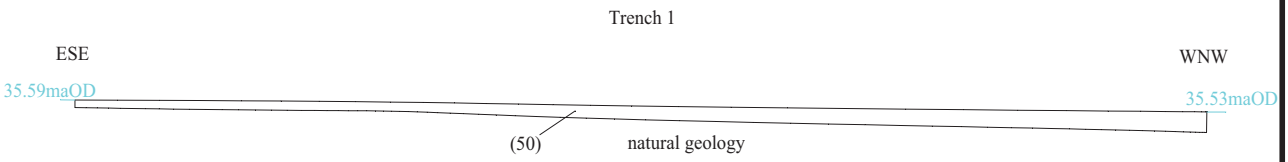
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Figure 3. Site plan.

0 10m

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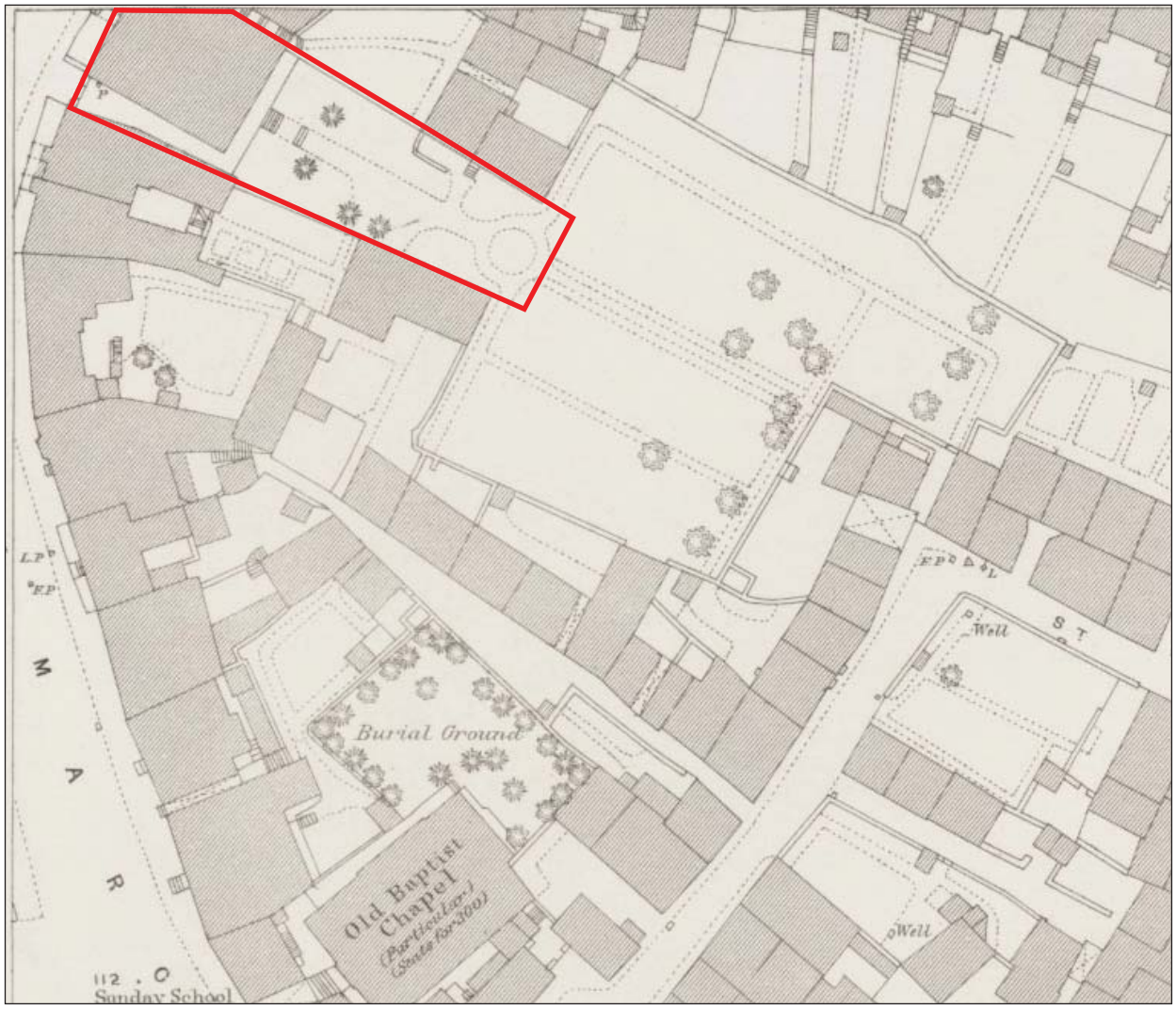
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Figure 4. Section.

0 1m

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Figure 5. Ordnance Survey Town Plan, 1887

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Plate 1. Trench 1, looking East, Scales: 1m.



Plate 2. Trench 1 and environs, looking East, Scales: 1m.



Plate 3. Trench 1 and environs, looking West, Scales: 1m.



Plate 4. Walls 51, 52 and floor 54, looking North East, Scales: 1m

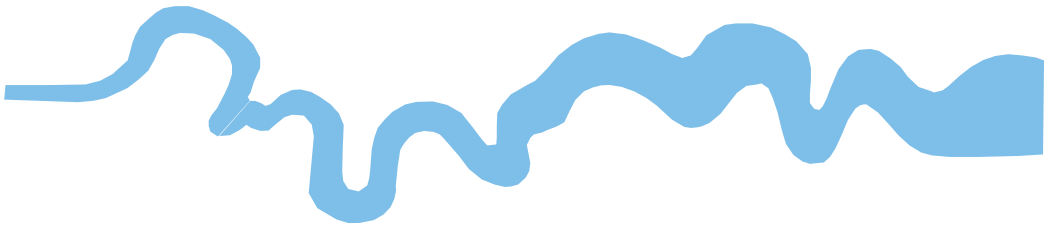
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5 St Margaret's Street,
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Plates 1 to 4.

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TIME CHART

	Calendar Years
Modern	AD 1901
Victorian	AD 1837
Post Medieval	AD 1500
Medieval	AD 1066
Saxon	AD 410
Roman	AD 43
	AD 0 BC
Iron Age	750 BC
Bronze Age: Late	1300 BC
Bronze Age: Middle	1700 BC
Bronze Age: Early	2100 BC
Neolithic: Late	3300 BC
Neolithic: Early	4300 BC
Mesolithic: Late	6000 BC
Mesolithic: Early	10000 BC
Palaeolithic: Upper	30000 BC
Palaeolithic: Middle	70000 BC
Palaeolithic: Lower	2,000,000 BC



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