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Archaeological Investigation at Wincobank Hall, Sheffield

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ARCHAEOLOGICAL EXCAVATIONS AT WINCOBANK HALL, SHEFFIELD

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ABSTRACT

Wincobank Hall was built in the 18th century and demolished in the early 20th century. The redevelopment of the site in 2004–8 offered an opportunity to investigate the remains of the 18th- and 19th-century Hall through historical research and archaeological excavation.

Although the remains of the Hall had been truncated, five archaeological phases were identified and significant assemblages of window glass, lead comes, bottle glass and pottery were recovered. Of particular interest are makers' marks on lead window comes which date to 1720 and 1736. Structural developments at the Hall during the 19th century correspond with the socio-political heyday of Wincobank Hall when it was a notable hub of anti-slavery campaigning and evangelical activity.

INTRODUCTION

The site of Wincobank Hall lies off Wincobank Avenue and Bluebell Road in the Sheffield suburb of High Wincobank (NGR 437700, 391200; Figure 1).

According to an early 20th-century newspaper article (Leader 1921) Wincobank Hall was originally a narrow, two-storey, stone building that was later extended into a three-storey structure, and construction was attributed to John Sparrow in the late 18th century (c.1770–80). Leader (1921) reported that the Brown, Sparrow, Roberts and Walker families owned Wincobank Hall between the 18th century and the early 19th century. It is known that a farm in Wincobank was auctioned in 1812 (Sheffield Archives (SA) ref. SSC3/2/1) and this could be the property bought by Joseph Read (from Jonathan Walker). Read also bought

several fields to the south from the Duke of Norfolk, in which he established gardens, orchards and pleasure grounds. With the additional grounds and alterations by Read, this became Wincobank Hall. However Read's business declined in the 1830s and the family were forced to leave the Hall. The early widowhood of Read's eldest daughter, Mary Ann Rawson, allowed her to pay her father's debts and re-purchase the Hall. Mary Ann remained at the Hall until her death in 1887.

By the early 20th century Sheffield's suburbs had expanded as far as the Wincobank area and the Hall was demolished to make way for housing in the 1930s.

The proposed redevelopment of the site in 2004 led to a programme of archaeological investigations which focused on the former site of the Hall (ARCUS 2004; 2008; Wessex Archaeology 2012).

NEW EVIDENCE FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF WINCOBANK HALL

Phase 1: early to middle 18th century

The earliest structure was a cellar found in the north-western part of the excavation area (Figures 2 and 3). Its substantial sandstone walls (1060, 1047, 1048 and 1132) were built directly onto natural deposits and the floor comprised large sandstone flags (1125). Stone springers on top of an internal wall provided evidence of a vaulted ceiling.

A large window (1134) in the western cellar wall (1047) was flanked by alcoves 1139 and 1140 (Figure 4). The window survived to a height of 0.65 m and comprised three lights separated by vertical stone mullions with a simple chamfered moulding set within a pale yellow sandstone frame. Externally the window was protected by a light-well (1119).

The line of cellar wall 1047 was continued north-east by foundation 1049 which lay beneath the un-celled frontage of the Hall. The south-eastern side of the cellar was obscured by later brick renovations but jamb sockets in the sandstone floor between walls 1132 and 1133 indicated the position of a doorway.

This first phase of archaeological activity corresponds with the construction of Wincobank Hall and indicates that it was a square half-cellaried structure. Dating evidence is provided by the stone-mullioned window in the cellar, which is 18th century in style, and the collection of lead comes with marker's marks dated 1720 and 1736 (see below). Few other finds were recovered from Phase 1 contexts; pottery and glass of this date were found on the site but were mostly residual in later deposits.

Phase 2: middle to late 18th century

The Hall was extended to the south-east (Figure 2) during the middle to late 18th century. The line of the southern cellar wall (1060) was continued in red brick (1058), punctuated with regular internal buttresses and supporting a vaulted ceiling (1059). The modifications to cellar wall 1132 were more difficult to reconstruct due to damage, but three walls (1053, 1054 and 1055) and a section of vaulting (1073) appeared to belong in this phase.

There is little historic evidence for this phase of construction but the first two archaeological phases appear to accord with Leader's (1921) description of Wincobank Hall's development from '*...the humble germ [Phase 1] whence it was developed into a narrow, two-storey building of stone, containing the kitchens [Phase 2]...*' Although Leader's sequence for the development of the building appears correct, his date for its original construction (c.1770–80) conflicts with the archaeological evidence which indicates a date in the second quarter of the 18th century.

Historic maps indicate that the extension had been completed when Fairbank's map of 1790 was produced. As with the previous phase, few finds were recovered from Phase 2 contexts but artefacts dating to this phase were found in later contexts, including fragments of a relatively rare octagonal glass bottle and two decorated Creamware tureens.

Phase 3: early to middle 19th century

Map evidence indicates that the majority of the Hall's outbuildings were built during Phase 3. The largest outbuilding was a rectangular structure which corresponds with a stable on

the 1837 sale plans (SA refs SSC3/7/3, SSC3/2/9). It survived as foundations 1006 and 1077 around a fragment of flagstone floor (1005) and a flagstone and cobble surface (1004; Figure 2). Middle to late 19th-century pottery was recovered from surface 1004 along with later wall-tile fragments. Small holes through three of the flags drained into a network of brick drains (including 1015 and 1110). The fill of drain 1015 contained middle to late 19th-century pottery.

A single-room ancillary structure abutted stable wall 1006 to the west. It comprised walls 1007 and 1012, with the entrance located between the latter and the stable.

To the south-west of the stable were sections of a straight wall (1091), a curved wall (1092) and a sandstone surface (1093). Both walls comprised rough worked and unworked sandstone bonded with lime-based mortar and the surface was unworked sandstone laid on natural deposits. The curved wall may have been a yard boundary as it appears to align with the stable wall to the north. Middle to late 19th-century pottery was found in association with floor 1093 and historic plans and maps indicate that the walled yard was added between 1837 and 1850 (SA refs SSC3/7/3, SSC3/2/9; Ordnance Survey 1850).

A ground-floor extension to the Hall was represented by walls 1037, 1038 and 1041. The earlier cellar window (1134) was bricked-up and the light-well (1119) was backfilled. Finds from the latter included an early 18th-century bone knife-handle. Mortar lines on the adjacent cellar walls and floor indicate other structural changes. Small rectangular divisions suggest that a series of brick walls were built: six along wall 1060, four out from the centre of wall 1047 and possibly two larger divisions along wall 1048. These are likely to be the remnants of storage bins, a common feature in 18th- to 19th-century cellars.

The extension on the northern side of the Hall could not be closely dated archaeologically. Leader (1921) believed that *'The large bay drawing-room window is an addition by Mr Read'* but the sale plan of 1937 (after Mr Read's death) does not show the extension and is probably correct in this respect. Overall the historic maps and plans suggest a likely construction date in the late 1840s when the Hall was owned by Read's daughter.

A courtyard to the north-west of the stables contained a stone-lined well (1021) surrounded by a circular gully (1024). The well was a dry-stone structure with and was difficult to phase or date with any certainty. Similarly, the remains of a drainage system to the south-west of the Hall (1063/1064 and 1065) and within the courtyard (1034, 1035, 1010 and 1101) were thought to belong in Phase 3 but definitive dating was problematic. No finds were recovered from the drains adjacent to the Hall and the others included pottery ranging in date from the 17th to 20th centuries.

Phase 4: middle to late 19th century

At some time from the middle to late 19th century the cellars were altered again (Figure 4): the alcoves in wall 1047 were bricked up (1043, 1083), blocked window 1134 was re-bricked (1044 and 1046), as were the alcoves (1043 and 1083, see Fig. 4). The bricks were handmade, re-used and heavily worn, and were bonded with black-ash mortar.

Other modifications were apparent in the small structure adjacent to the stables where a drain (1011) was inserted. It had been laid over the original stone floor and through a new wall (1014) and fed into drain 1010 in the courtyard (Phase 3). Wall 1014 differed in construction from the earlier walls, comprising small, worked sandstone blocks with no mortar. Rather than being laid in a trench the drain was built at floor level and covered with silt deposits. The ground level at the entrance was raised with roughly worked stones.

The silt deposit (1009) appears to have been derived, in part, from household waste and included a large homogenous pottery assemblage dating to the later 18th to early 19th century.

Phase 5: early 20th century

No further structural changes were evident in the archaeological record until the demolition of the Hall. As would be expected, 20th-century material was recovered from a number of contexts across the site, including cellar demolition deposits, the stable/outbuilding floors, a drain, and the well.

THE ARTEFACTS

Vessel glass

With the exception of a single phial rim all of the vessel glass comes from green wine bottles, all belonging to the period prior to the introduction of the three-piece cylindrical mould in the early 19th century. The condition of this material varies but most fragments show at least some surface patina and some are heavily weathered with surface pitting and flaking.

Fragments of rim, neck, body and base were recovered but no overall profiles are reconstructable. Five rims recovered from Phase 3 drains (1010, 1034 and 1035) include: a single string-rim from drain 1010 that can be dated to the later 17th century, one from 1035 which is more typical of the early 18th century and, a double string-rim from 1010 which is later still, dating c.1800–15 (Dumbrell 1983, 57, 80, 92–3).

Thirteen bases were recovered; nine from a single Phase 3 drain (1010). None of these show the rounded body profile of the 17th-century shaft-and-globe or onion bottles but, without reconstructable profiles, and hence the base/body height ratio (*ibid.*, 91, 102), it is difficult to place the bases within the overall sequence of mallet, squat cylindrical and cylindrical bottles of the 18th and early 19th centuries. The base diameters suggest that most are typical of the squat cylindrical or cylindrical forms which date from c.1770 into the early 19th century (*ibid.*, 37; Hume 1969, 67–8).

The body fragments are largely undiagnostic but again there are no signs of the earlier, rounded bottle forms, and one or two shoulder fragments certainly fit within the mallet/cylindrical sequence. Three body fragments (all from Phase 3 drains) are from prismatic forms; these can be identified as octagonal bottles belonging to the period c.1730–90 (Dumbrell 1983, 87–90); this was a form blown into a one-piece mould and is relatively uncommon.

The single phial top comes from a cylindrical form with well-defined shoulders; the form can be broadly dated to the second half of the 17th century or later (Willmott 2002, type 26.2).

The bottle and phial glass appears to be largely of 18th- or early 19th- century date, with at least one piece belonging to the late 17th century. Bottle bases within the largest context group, from Phase 3 drain 1010, suggest a focus in the later 18th or early 19th century (c.1770–1815), but the smaller context groups, although less certainly dated, may contain slightly earlier material. However, pottery dates from some of these contexts indicate that the glass must be residual.

Window glass and lead cames

The window glass and lead-came assemblages derived from four contexts. Three (1120, 1136, 1137) were associated with the Phase 1 cellar window (1134) while deposit 1072 represented the lower demolition fill of the cellar in Phase 5. The assemblage provides evidence of at least three glazing episodes.

The assemblage of window glass amounts to 257 fragments. The majority of the fragments are in a pale greenish glass with a slight surface patina but lacking any signs of heavy weathering; this glass is cylinder blown, and is of a relatively constant thickness of around 1.2 mm. The consistent thickness, and the fact that the glass shows few bubbles, indicates good quality.

These fragments belong to diamond-shaped and triangular quarries (Figure 5). The outside edges of the diamond quarries have been relatively neatly grozed (snipped with pliers), while the basal edges of the triangular quarries shows some irregularity. Only two diamond quarries retain measurable dimensions (c.125 x 100 mm). Of the six measurable triangular quarries, four are half-diamonds split lengthways (in the range 100–10 x 40–3 mm), while two have been split crossways (c.90 x 60 mm). One surviving corner from a window light, preserving two triangular quarries in their lead cames, contains one of each type, indicating

that the quarries split lengthways were used up the sides, while the crossways-splits were used at top and bottom of the light.

A smaller proportion of the window glass (63 fragments) is in almost colourless glass. Although one complete triangular quarry in colourless glass came from 1137, as well as one diamond/triangular corner fragment, all of the colourless glass from 1120 appears to represent square or rectangular quarries. A broken but relatively intact iron glazing-bar from 1120 confirmed that the individual lights would have been rectangular and c. 0.7 x 0.3 m in size.

Six complete or partial glass quarries were preserved within lead comes. There were 114 further lead fragments, mostly from comes but also including eight narrow twisted strips; the latter would have been used to attach the individual glazed lights to the vertical glazing bars.

The comes are all of a similar profile, H-sectioned with wide flanges, and milled in a toothed mill; a type dated to the 18th to 19th century at Battle Abbey, East Sussex (Knight 1985, type G). The teeth of the mill were spaced 3.5mm apart and left raised ridges, or reeding, on the heart of the come, which provided a key for the putty used to secure the quarries in place. Of greater interest, however, is the identification of embossed makers' marks, also found on the heart. Two marks were identified, the first reading '· FM · 1720 ·' (6 examples; Figure 6) and the second 'IB 1736' or 'LB 1736' (25 examples; Figure 7). The longest section of come (360 mm) contained two internal marks c.105 mm (4 $\frac{1}{8}$ inches) apart, confirming that the milling wheel used was 33 mm (1 $\frac{1}{2}$ inches) in diameter.

Diamond leaded lights were used from the later 16th century and throughout the 17th century; despite the growing popularity of square or rectangular panes from around 1660, diamond panes were still commonly used into the 18th century (Hall 2005, 86). Their earliest use undoubtedly reflected the economical way in which they could utilise even small scraps of glass around the edge of a window. A central glazing bar or stanchion,

either of wood or metal, held the leaded lights securely, by means of fine wire; otherwise, the soft lead comes could still flex under pressure.

The identification of makers' marks on comes is of great interest. Such marks have been found on milled comes dating from the 17th to early 19th centuries, some giving dates, some initials and some whole names and place of manufacture (Egan *et al.* 1986). First noted on 17th-century leads from colonial sites in North America, similar marks were subsequently recorded widely in England, but never forming more than a small proportion of the total (although it is more than possible that many have been missed, given the time and labour taken to unwrap and clean comes in order to see them). The inscriptions would have been cut in reverse on to one or both wheels of the vice used for hand-milling. Preliminary work indicates that the English examples come mainly from upper-class homes or other high-status buildings, and may have been used as a means of quality control, since the thinner leads produced by milling were correspondingly more likely to buckle or collapse under pressure, through negligence, or through the deliberately sparing use of lead (*ibid.*, 306–7). The marks on the leads could have belonged to vice-makers or glaziers.

The two marks seen here, from 1720 and 1736, suggests two relatively closely-spaced episodes of glazing in one window, but it could be that the 1720 comes represent re-use from an earlier window. The remains of the stone mullioned window are 18th century in style and, combined with the leaded window comes, suggest that Phase 1 dates to the second quarter of the 18th century. The square or rectangular panes, meanwhile, seem to be 19th-century replacements.

Pottery

The majority of the pottery derived from the Phase 3 drains, stables and well, the Phase 4 outbuilding alterations, levelling deposits and drain, and Phase 5 cellar fills.

The earliest sherds are probably the Redware and Slipware type 1 (Redware with white trailed slip decoration). This type of pottery originated in the 17th century but seems to have

continued in production into the early 18th century. Given the date range of the assemblage as a whole and the absence of other distinctive 17th-century wares, it seems probable that this example is of a late date and is contemporary with the early 18th-century wares. The same probably applies to the sherds of Tin Glazed Earthenware. Although manufactured in Britain from the mid-16th century (and imported from the Netherlands), it is unlikely that these sherds pre-date the assemblage as a whole and an early to mid-18th-century date is probable. Only one of the sherds bears a painted design, the others being either plain or lacking their original surfaces. The small Tin Glazed Earthenware cup, jar or beaker from Phase 4 levelling deposit 1105 (Figure 8) is, to date, the only complete example of this type of pottery from an excavated site in Sheffield (although individual and small groups of sherds are a regular find on sites with an early modern component across the city).

A small number of White Salt Glazed Stoneware sherds were recovered. Manufactured c.1720–1780, White Salt Glazed Stoneware was the first indigenous pottery to offer competition to imported Chinese porcelain (Edwards and Hampson 2005) and is a common minor component of mixed assemblages from across Sheffield. From the mid-18th century its position in the market was challenged by the development of refined earthenware bodies which were used to produce first Creamware (c.1740–1820) and, later, Pearlware (c.1780–1840). Both types are present in significant quantities and were particularly well represented in Phase 4 levelling deposit 1009. The majority of Creamwares are undecorated.

Both plain- and transfer-printed Pearlwares are present with one sherd of Edged ware. The co-occurrence of Creamwares and Pearlwares in the same contexts (notably the Phase 4 levelling deposit 1009) would seem to suggest a later 18th- or even early 19th-century date for the creation of the deposit.

Sherds of porcelain are also present. Those from levelling deposit 1009 are of particular interest as they seem to have been repaired and this may indicate that the plate in question had, for a short time at least, a value considerably above its essential utility. The origin of

the vessels is unclear but they may well be of Chinese origin and could be of 17th-century date although there is little doubt that they were discarded at the same time as the pottery with which they were associated.

The relationship between 18th- and early 19th-century formal tablewares (White Salt Glazed Stoneware, Creamware and Pearlware) and the 18th-century vernacular tablewares is one that has been discussed briefly elsewhere (Cumberpatch 2010) and to some extent remains unresolved. It is clear that Slip Coated ware, Mottled ware, Late Blackware and Slipware were all in production throughout the 18th century (*ibid.*, table 24) but the precise relationship in terms of social practice between the two very different classes of pottery remains obscure. Evidence such as that from Wincobank Hall strongly implies that both groups were in use within the same households but the details of the social contexts and locales within which the vernacular tableware was deployed remains obscure while the social role of formal tea and coffee wares has been the subject of considerable discussion in the context of 18th-century social history. At the level of the organisation of production, the two classes of pottery attest to the co-existence of two distinct modes of production which were presumably reflected in distinct patterns of circulation.

The 19th- and early 20th-century tablewares include Whiteware (plain and transfer printed), Colour Glazed ware, Cane Coloured ware and Bone China (plain and transfer printed). With the exception of the Whitewares, these types could have overlapped with the later Pearlwares although in the absence of maker's marks it is difficult to be precise as to the date ranges of individual sherds or vessels. Utilitarian wares are represented by the ubiquitous Brown Glazed Coarsewares, Brown Glazed Finewares and one sherd of Yellow Glazed Coarseware. Pancheons and bowls were the commonest vessel types in Brown and Yellow Glazed Coarseware but the Brown Glazed Finewares appear to be predominantly hollow wares. This type is also, generally speaking, of a somewhat earlier date than the Coarsewares which span the period between the later 17th and early 20th century although

none of the examples in the assemblage appears to pre-date the 18th century. One example of particular note is the profile of a steep-sided pancheon or jar from the fill of well 1021 which may have been deposited in a complete or semi-complete state.

The pottery assemblage considered here differs from most of those recovered from Sheffield in that it consists of a relatively small number of vessels, of which a number are complete or substantially complete. This evidence, together with the character of the assemblage sets it apart from assemblages typical of Sheffield in which material of widely differing dates occurs together, apparently because it was re-used after collection and curation as material for raising or preparing ground prior to building work. In contrast the present assemblage appears to represent a more conventional set of formation processes. Specifically it would appear that the assemblage consists, at least in part, of tablewares and utilitarian wares discarded in a limited number of events. If this was the case then the relative scarcity of vernacular tablewares might indicate that they were used in social and spatial contexts apart from those in which the formal tablewares and utilitarian kitchen and storage wares were deployed. Possible parallels for the deposits include Temple Balsall (Gooder 1984) and Orgreave Hall (Cumberpatch 1996) although the Wincobank Hall assemblage is somewhat later than those from both of these sites and the similarities between the sites should not be overemphasised.

WINCOBANK HALL AND THE READ FAMILY

Unusually for an archaeological site we have an opportunity to better understand some stages in the development of Wincobank Hall through relatively detailed historical information about its owners and occupants.

The Reads were involved in various philanthropic activities, from helping with the running of the local Sunday school, to being involved in the Sheffield Bible Society, the Missionary Society and the Sunday School Union. Soon after moving to Wincobank Hall in 1815 they

regularly offered accommodation to missionaries touring the north of England, including prominent evangelicals (Twells 2009, 99). The early years of Joseph Read's ownership correspond with archaeological Phase 3 and included alterations such as the addition of the stables, presumably to accommodate the horses of the travelling visitors.

Following the failure of the business in the 1830s and Read's death in 1837, his son did not want to take over the business (SA ref. SSC1/5/4/3) and the property was put up for sale, including:

'...the House, Coach House, Stables, Outbuildings and all other conveniences for a Gentleman's Family. The Gardens are stocked with the choicest Fruit Trees, the Pleasure Grounds and Buildings are in perfect order and repair...' (SA refs SSC3/7/3, SSC3/2/9).

The Hall was subsequently bought by Read's eldest daughter Mary Ann Rawson after the death of her husband, probably c.1840 (SA ref. SSC3/7/6). Mary Ann purchased Wincobank Hall (probably as detailed in the 1837 Sale documents) and settled her mother, sisters and daughter there.

Following Mary Ann's return to Sheffield she became a founding member of the Sheffield Ladies' Association for the Universal Abolition of Slavery, having been involved, along with her mother Elizabeth, in the establishment of the anti-slavery movement in Sheffield in 1825 (Twells 2009, 99).

The northern extension to the Hall was built in the 1840s after Mary Ann's purchase of the property, possibly to accommodate meetings or additional guests. Certainly by the 1940s Wincobank Hall hosted regular festivals and meetings of the Wincobank Total Abstinence Society, as well as evening classes for local men in an attempt to encourage a teetotal lifestyle (Twells 2009). Ale and beer cellars were listed in an inventory in 1816 (around the time when Read purchased the Hall; SA ref. MD6041) and it is possible that the family's conversion to teetotalism in the 1840s may have led to the alterations to the cellars that were recorded during the archaeological investigations.

It appears that there were few major structural alterations to Wincobank Hall in the later 19th century, possibly as a result of Rawson's advancing age. The archaeological evidence suggests that the cellar alcoves and former window were blocked up at this time (Phase 4) and a drain was added inside the small outbuilding adjacent to the stables.

The Hall was bought by the Salvation Army in 1887 as a home for young women and girls. The Salvation Army left the Hall in c.1915 and the property fell into disrepair. Comparison of the sale plan drawn up as a result of Mary Ann's death in 1887 (SA ref. SSC3/7/31) with the later Ordnance Survey maps indicates that no further additions or alterations were made to the property and the archaeological evidence supports this. In 1921 the Sheffield Board of Guardians described the Hall as being '...in a state of desolation...' (Leader 1921).

Although Wincobank Hall remained standing during the initial development of the Flower Estate in the 1920s, the housing estate was then expanded and, in 1928 the Hall was demolished. The cellars were filled with demolition debris; the fact that these deposits contained relatively small quantities of earlier artefacts is thought to indicate that the building had been stripped before demolition.

ARCHIVE

The archive has been deposited with Sheffield Museum under accession code SHEFM:2004.1, and a detailed site report has been submitted to the South Yorkshire Sites and Monuments Record.

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DOCUMENTS, MAPS & PLANS AT SHEFFIELD ARCHIVES (SA)

1790 Map of Sheffield by W. Fairbank.

1809–1818 Fire insurance to Joseph Read of Royds Mills... including a memo that the insurance on his dwelling house has been transferred to a new dwelling house at Wincobank, ref. SSC1/2/1/9.

1812 31st October Printed poster advertising the auction of a farm at Wincobank, ref. SSC3/2/1.

1816 March 23rd An inventory and valuation of particulars at Wincobank House, ref. MD6041.

1837 17th October Auctioneer's plan and particulars of sale for Freehold Mansion House, Farms and Lands at Wincobank and Attercliffe, refs SSC3/7/3, SSC3/2/9.

1840 Some correspondence with the solicitors about the conveyance of Wincobank Hall...to Mrs M.A. Rawson, ref. SSC3/7/6.

1887 18th October Auctioneer's plan and particulars of sale of Wincobank Hall and Estate
ref SSC3/7/31.

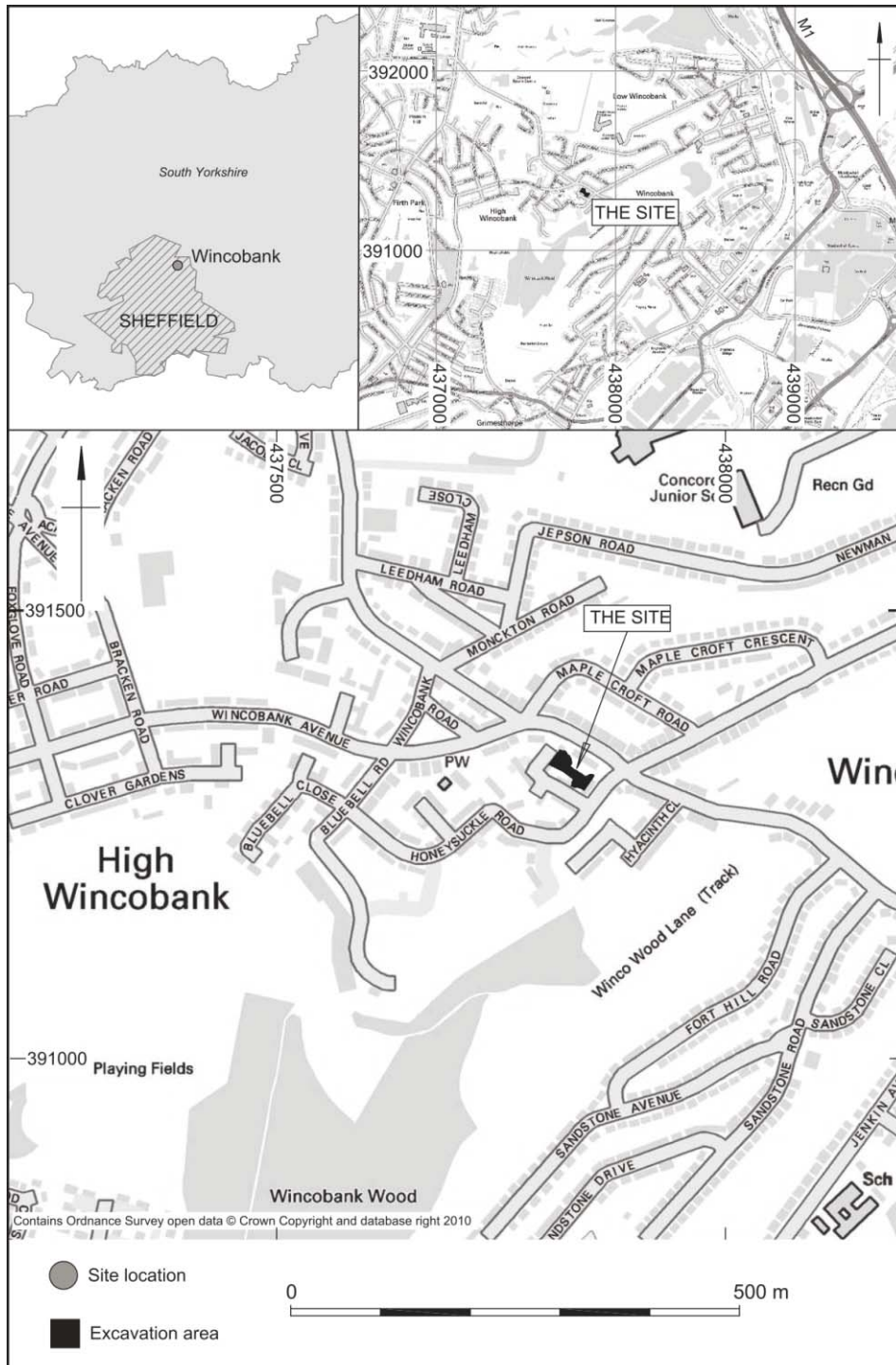


Figure 1: Site location plan

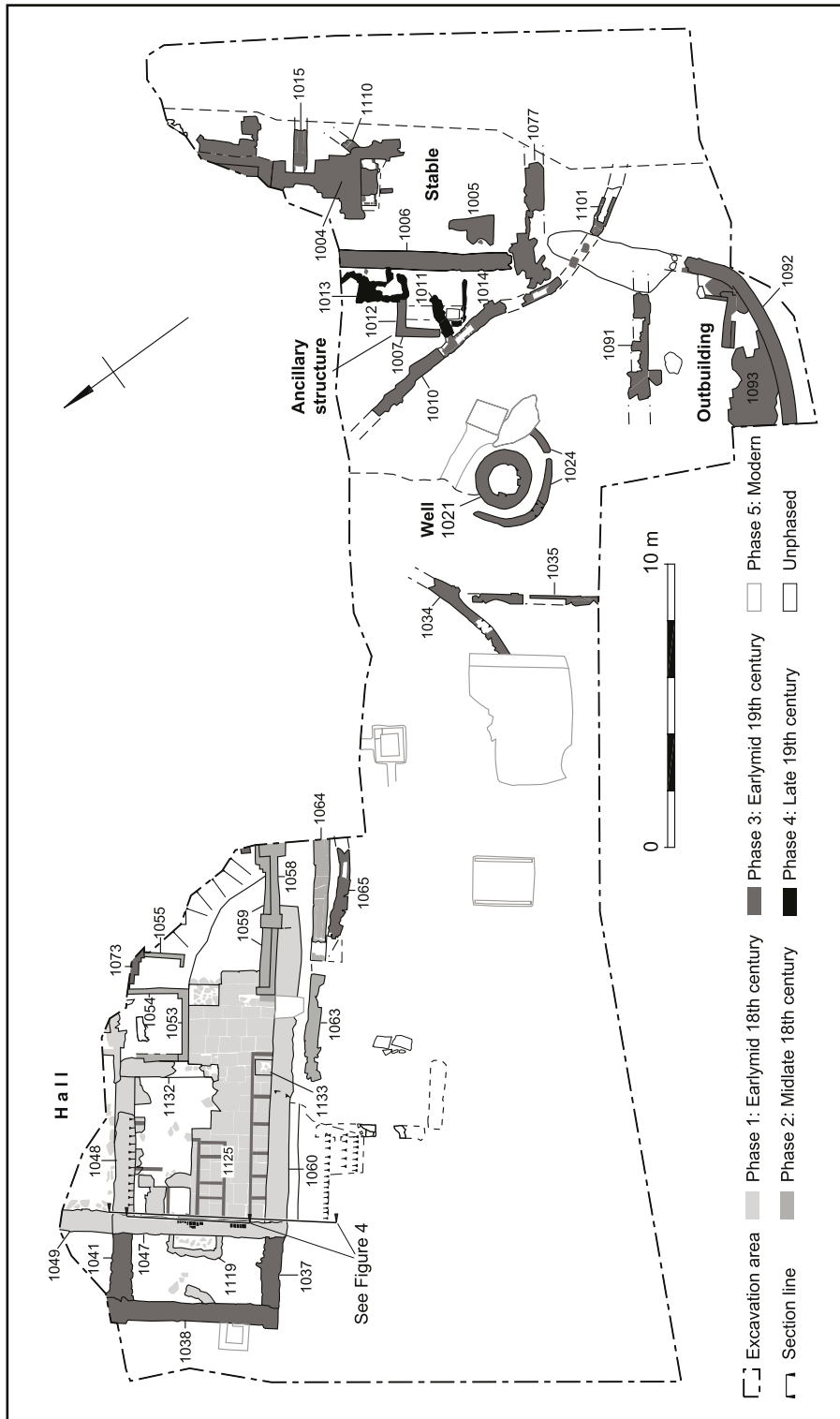


Figure 2: Phased plan



Figure 3: Phase 1 cellar

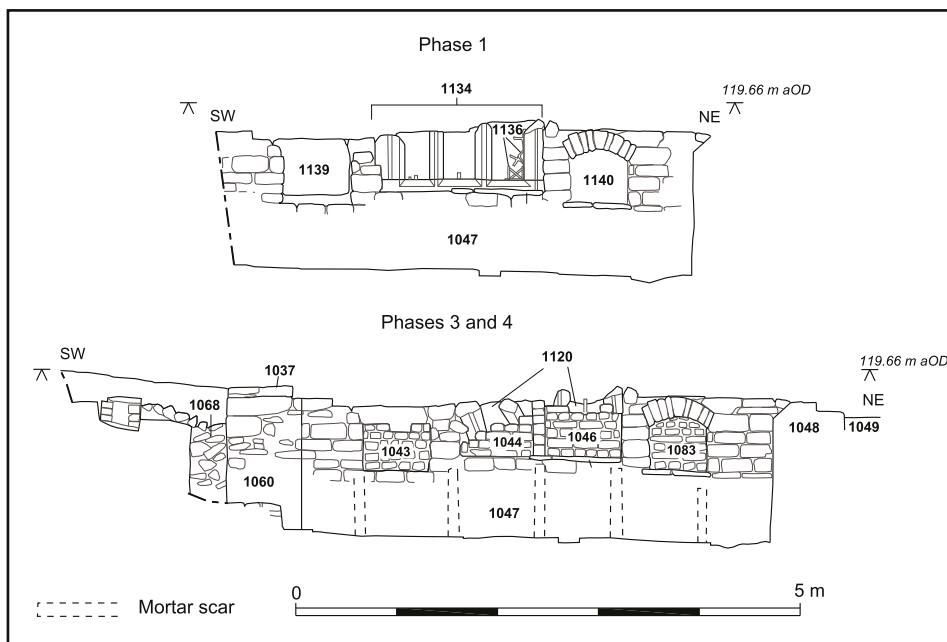


Figure 4: Wall 1047 elevation (Phases 1, 3 and 4)

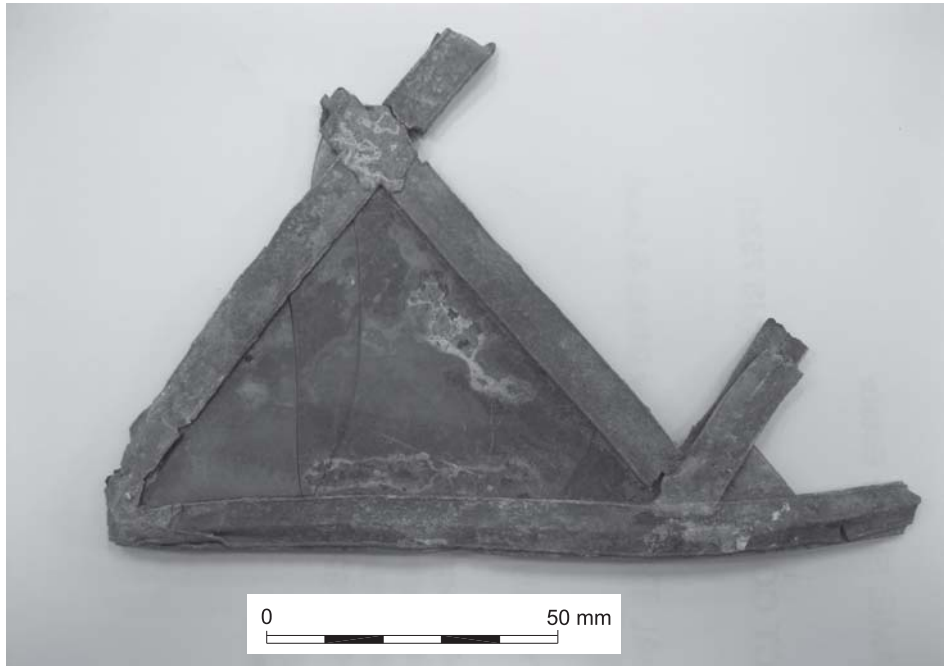


Figure 5: Fragment of window glass with lead came from context 1136



Figure 6: Window lead with 1720 stamp



Figure 7: Window lead with 1736 stamp



Figure 8: Tin-glazed earthenware vessel from context 1105



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