

The
ESG
ARCHAEOLOGY
MASTERPLAN

A report for ESG Herefordshire Ltd

Herefordshire Archaeology
Report no. 265

March 2009

The ESG Archaeology Masterplan
Herefordshire Archaeology Report 265
March 2009

CONTENTS

Archaeological management within ESG

- Key constraints

- Priority information gathering

- Overview of potential and value

- Archaeological procedures

- Below-ground archaeology: key issues

- Historic buildings & archaeology: key issues

- Key opportunities for historic asset enhancement

- Archaeology and design: positive place-making

- Archaeological risks and mitigation

- Public archaeology in ESG

Detailed area assessments: 1. Infrastructure projects

Detailed area assessments: 2. The Urban Village

Detailed area assessments: 3. The Football Ground
 Retail Quarter
 Catherine Street area
 Station Approach

Conclusions: recommendations for further work

Bibliography

A note on the mapping for this report

Archaeological management within the ESG: a strategic statement

The broad purpose of the master plan is to provide:

- A coherent framework within which development can proceed
- A summary of constraints and opportunities
- A general summary of procedures that should be followed in the development process
- A statement of desirable outcomes in terms of the management of the archaeological resource and the future design of the visible historic landscape and assets

Short-term desirable outcomes:

- The master plan should act as a guide and bench-mark, signed up to by all parties in advance of development
- The masterplan should help to facilitate acceptable, fully-detailed area appraisals, identifying (for example, but not limited to) what further information might be needed at what stage
- The masterplan should help to facilitate future high-quality studies of key asset groups (for instance Blackfriars and the City Walls).
- The masterplan should help to facilitate initial works or early-stage works designed to improve the information base regarding archaeology and the historic environment

Long-term desirable outcomes:

- The masterplan should achieve buy-in from relevant development and environmental partners and interests
- The masterplan should achieve buy-in from other key stakeholders including the general public
- The masterplan should provide a basis for the satisfactory preservation by record, and/or the selective preservation *in situ* of significant archaeological remains
- The masterplan should provide a basis for the positive enhancement of the setting, and the suitable management of, key historic assets
- The masterplan should guide urban design and architecture towards adequate sensitivity to the inherited historical fabric and framework
- The masterplan should lead, within the ESG area, to the fulfilment of the terms and vision of Herefordshire Council's Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) relating to archaeology and development

The masterplan is in accordance with and promulgates Policies ARCH 1 – ARCH 8 of the currently adopted Herefordshire Unitary Development Plan. On expiry of this plan in March 2010 the

masterplan will advance the aims of the emerging Local Development Framework.

Key constraints

1. Scheduled Monuments

Two specific locations represent particular constraints by virtue of their protected legal status as well as their intrinsic archaeological value.

- The site of the former Dominican Friary (Blackfriars) with Coningsby's Hospital is the only Scheduled Monument present within the ESG area. This site represents a significant historic environment focus in the core of the ESG area and, while it is undoubtedly a constraint, it is also a major heritage asset offering opportunities for creative townscape design.
- The second Scheduled Monument lies along the southern perimeter of the ESG area: the line of and, in many cases, the physical above ground remains of, the medieval city wall. This monument, and the protection of its setting, represents a particular design challenge.

2. The Hereford Area of Archaeological Importance (AAI)

In 1983 the walled city and historic suburbs of Hereford were designated an Area of Archaeological Importance under the 1979 Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act. This remains in force, Herefordshire Council being the administering authority and requiring from prospective developers six weeks' formal notice of any ground disturbance, or of the intention to tip on or flood the site. The following areas of the ESG fall within the AAI:

- The Blackfriars and Coningsby's Hospital precincts together form a complex that lies at the heart of this part of the Hereford AAI.
- Parts of the Widemarsh Street and Commercial Road suburbs

Within these areas a particularly high level of archaeological provision will probably be needed, depending on how well preserved remains are found to be, and the difficulties of accommodating and funding new development may be great. It needs to be emphasised that special procedures (see below) exist in relation to Scheduled Monuments and Archaeological Areas.

3. The Widemarsh floodplain

- The northern half of the ESG area is a low-lying flood-prone zone, partly green-field and partly brown-field, historically 'the Wide Marsh' –

This zone represents a constraint because of the likelihood of it containing very well preserved archaeological deposits, in particular those containing surviving organic remains (usually wood, leather and botanical remains) which would be lost in a dry environment. Such conditions are likely throughout the floodplain, and have been proved by excavation under the north side of the Blackfriars precinct, in adjacent suburban tenements on Widemarsh Street, and in an infilled channel between the Blackfriars and Canal Road.

- Prehistoric remains in the floodplain. This area may have become drier in the late Neolithic – early Bronze Age period, c. 2500-1500 BC, as demonstrated south of the River Wye at Rotherwas, and hinted at by the Cattle Market Beaker finds belonging to this period. As such, settlement may have covered much of the area adjacent to a stream channel running at a lower elevation than today. Following the onset of wetter climatic conditions and intensified arable farming, the ancient profile of the brook became buried under alluvium and peat (as demonstrated at the Police Dog Training Ground), and this may have preserved important remains here. If waterlogged finds or well-preserved prehistoric finds are made, they may be of exceptionally high value and represent a major archaeological issue (see below).

4. Industrial remains

Also offering a likely constraint, and needing full consideration in any planning, design and construction process, are a number of remains dating from the Industrial period.

- The historic layout and any surviving structure of the now buried Victorian canal and terminus wharfs. The remains of this canal are likely to be encountered in many locations along the north-eastern fringe of the ESG area and have a significant historic link with the railway station that eventually supplanted the canal as Hereford's principal large-scale transport link.
- Industrial development of and around Monkmoor Mill. Timber-yards and a saw-mill, tanneries, a gas-works and a carriage and motor works all developed from or close to the medieval mill, serviced by the nearby canal and, later, the railway

5. Unlocated major archaeological sites

Some of the most significant constraints cannot be quantified at present because they relate to archaeological sites of very high value that, although believed to exist somewhere within the ESG area, cannot currently be *proven* to do so.

- One such is the lost, temporary, precinct of the Dominican Friary (Blackfriars) that was established in 1246 and abandoned when the present Blackfriars precinct was founded c.1319. It is known only to have been somewhere in the Portfields and would probably (like its permanent replacement) have been in a floodplain edge situation where its buildings could be flood-free but serviceable by watercourses. Were such an archaeological site to be found comparatively late in a development programme, it would constitute a very significant problem.
- A comparable problem is raised by the discovery of a single prehistoric pit (of late Neolithic/early Bronze Age date) in a 2006 archaeological evaluation trench (SMR 44131 tr.8) in the Cattle Market. The pit is unlikely to be an isolated find: it is more likely to be an outlying feature of an unlocated but potentially highly significant settlement site.

6. Historic landscape and contemporary urban design

A number of the historic features or sites within ESG and on its periphery pose particularly demanding challenges for the urban designer. The outcomes will impact not just on the individual sites but also on the functioning of the regenerated ESG area as a whole.

- *The Blackfriars precinct.* While the formal gardens offer a seldom-used oasis of calm tucked away behind the street frontage, this very isolation increases the vulnerability of the ruins, while 20th-century buildings encroaching from the east makes their former precinct setting illegible. To be successful, redesign of this area will have to preserve its tranquillity while simultaneously increasing its visibility and restoring its historical legibility
- *Barrs Court Railway Station.* Not since the station opened in the 1850s has its setting ever been satisfactory, either in terms of framing the station building as a significant gateway to Hereford, or in terms of providing a clear and direct linkage to and from the city centre. The ESG design process offers an unprecedented opportunity to achieve both
- *The city walls.* While the city walls have been visible since the late 1960s when the buildings that had encroached on them were cleared away, they have, ever since, been severely compromised by their setting, dominated by the dual-carriageway ring-road and its heavy traffic flows. The redesign of Blue School Street and New Market Street offers a chance for creating an enhanced setting for this iconic monument, and for creating carefully planned and historically sympathetic linkages between the historic core and the ESG. For example, the best-preserved section of the wall stands immediately north of the Maylord Orchard shopping centre. By setting back the

- *Cityscape*. Historically, the ESG area has not been part of the city: it has been part of the suburbs, and open countryside – and its inherited morphology still reflects this. There is, therefore, an inbuilt tension between the desire to re-mould the ESG as fully part of the city, and the desire to retain the most significant inherited features and, with them, the individuality and identity both of the ESG in particular and Hereford as a whole. The successful resolution of this contradiction is perhaps the greatest challenge in the ESG urban design process. It is arguably one that will only be solved by a judicious planning of new urban spaces – foci, rather than routes – and landmark buildings, that replicates the inherited urban form of the old city with its rhythmic alternation of precincts, through-streets and market-places, monumental public buildings and ordinary shops

Priority information gathering

Although an overall review of baseline information and an archaeological and townscape characterisation study have already been undertaken (Cotton, 2003, Baker, 2007) it will nevertheless be necessary to provide additional, more detailed, area-based assessments to consider the specific information base and issues pertaining to each area. Of particular importance will be any work on those areas containing or relevant to particular historic environment features, such as the Blackfriars precinct and the City Walls.

- *Geotechnical*. Any opportunities for improving the currently limited data set as regards below ground conditions should be taken. Even comparatively limited or seemingly non-archaeological operations may be helpful in this respect, for instance geotechnical works. There is also a possibility in some cases that remote sensing or geophysical survey techniques may be valuable.
- *The water table*. Further information is also urgently needed on the implications of proposed flood-prevention measures on the local water table, and the consequent impact of any reduction on permanently waterlogged archaeological deposits. Any significant reduction in the water table may result in the degradation of buried organic remains (objects and structures) that have so far been preserved in permanently waterlogged strata. If there is a risk here, this needs to be quantified and measures put in place to monitor the degradation of buried remains in situ and assess methods of mitigating the impact.
- *Field evaluation*. There will, in most locations, still be an urgent need for intrusive archaeological field evaluation (i.e. archaeological trial pits/trenches) to provide reliable ground-based information at an early stage. It would be a potential developer's responsibility to commission



General view of the ESG looking north-east

Overview of potential and value

Industrial remains (18th-20th centuries)

The ESG area is part of the historic fringe-belt of the medieval and later city, and thus one of its principal transport infrastructure and industrial zones. This principally affects the northern edge of the ESG area, which includes the site of industrial development on and around the earlier Monkmoor Mill, the canal terminus of the 1840s and, of course, the Victorian railway station of the 1850s. Together these form a site or area of appreciable heritage value, one that directly reflects a significant turning-point in the history of the city, when the long-standing rural isolation of Hereford came to a sudden end, and the modernisation and improvement of the city infrastructure (of which the new Cattle Market was a major part) began. Arguably, this potential could form a point of departure for urban design and planning and should not be overlooked.

Medieval and early post-medieval remains (12th-17th centuries)

Historic precincts. There are a number of individual sites and areas present which have high archaeological potential and value. Foremost amongst these are the medieval monastic institutions and their precincts, the Dominican Friary (Blackfriars) and Coningsby's Hospital, a re-foundation of the medieval Hospital of St John (and before that, the leper hospital of St Sepulchre). Both offer a combination of dense, complex, deeply-stratified below-ground remains with standing buildings and surviving archival resources. Burials are known from both sites.

Medieval suburbs. The ESG area incorporates two medieval suburbs: all of the Widemarsh Street suburb and the northern side of the Bye Street (Commercial Road) suburb. Both suburbs are known to have been developing in the 12th century, and both can be expected to include a mixture of domestic occupation, generally on the frontages, with industrial activity, generally in the back-plot areas. The section of the Widemarsh Street suburb that was developed across the floodplain is of particular importance, as it is known to contain deep and exceptionally well-preserved waterlogged deposits, with good survival of buried organic materials.

Waterpower sites. One medieval and later mill site occurs within the ESG area: the former Monkmoor Mill (SMR 8230), lying under the north corner of Morrison's supermarket. This site was examined in the 1980s when the medieval mill structure was found to have survived later developments, and was preserved in situ. The medieval Widemarsh Mill lay just outside the ESG area on the far side of Edgar Street but its downstream watercourses – the tail race and by-pass channel – run across Merton Meadow.

Saxon and Roman remains (1st-11th centuries)

No remains of the Saxon period (pre-Norman, c.500-1100) have been found within the ESG area and none need necessarily be expected. However, there is excavated evidence from the Tesco site, within the city walls, that pre-Norman occupation did develop northwards along the road that preceded Edgar Street commencing just outside the old Eign Gate. There is however no evidence that this extended as far north as the present Tesco roundabout area, and there was no sign of such occupation in the relevant Cattle Market evaluation trenches. The medieval mill sites, Monkmoor Mill and Widemarsh Mill, may have been originated before the Norman Conquest, though no trace of pre-Conquest structures was recorded when the former was examined, and the latter lies just outside the ESG area; its downstream watercourses could, however, have been engineered in this period.

No Roman remains have ever been proven to exist within the ESG area, though there have been two sightings of metal surfaces, each identified on discovery as a possible Roman road. The first was found in 1988 in trenches within the city wall on the south side of New Market Street (SMR 44356). A 'laid pebble surface' was identified, overlying undisturbed natural deposits and

sealed by a pre-12th-century soil, apparently heading north-west. If this were indeed a linear feature it would cross into the Cattle Market and thus the ESG area about 45 metres west of the New Market Inn. No further evidence of such a road has been seen since, though its suggested line could not be specifically targeted in the 2006 or 2007 Cattle Market evaluations. Another metalled surface was found during the construction of a culvert for the Widemarsh Brook at a depth of 2.5 metres just north of the Morrison's supermarket building (SMR 30326); this was suggested to be a road of medieval or earlier date, possibly Roman. Again, it has not been seen since, and could conceivably even have been a prehistoric feature.

Prehistoric remains c.4000BC-1stC BC

There is considerable potential that is nevertheless very difficult to quantify over most of the ESG area. Finds made in the northern part of the Cattle Market site (retail quarter) indicate late Neolithic/Bronze Age activity. Although evidence of activity at this date is currently limited to a single pit, there is a strong possibility that a more extensive, and very significant, site of this period may be present somewhere in the vicinity. Ground data from the cattle market site suggests there may be good survival of original deposit profiles across much of the western part of the ESG area, which increases the risk of any prehistoric remains having survived there.

It is known that peat deposits of prehistoric date are present in the northern half of the ESG area and that these deposits are of very high archaeological potential and value (see above).

Archaeological procedures

The archaeological procedures that should be followed in relation to development are detailed in full in the Herefordshire **Archaeology and Development Supplementary Planning Document** (c.f.) and discussed in the round later in this masterplan. However, it will be helpful to summarise here a number of matters of particular importance or relevance:

1. It needs to be stressed first of all that some archaeological procedures are not just stated needs or local requirements but are specific legal imperatives. Under the **Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act, 1979** some parts of the ESG area and its margins are formally designated and protected by government for their heritage value. In these parts (principally the city walls, the broad location of Blackfriars, and some of the areas leading off Widemarsh Street and Commercial Road) there are particular and unique requirements to obtain specific consents for works, or notifications of works.
2. In general, as regards Planning under the 1991 Town and Country Planning Act and other pertinent (for instance, environmental) legislation, Herefordshire Council will follow historic environment national planning guidance (PPG 16, 1991 and PPG 15, 1995). Herefordshire Council will also

follow the relevant local policies of its own Unitary Development Plan (UDP) 2007, in particular [archaeological] policies ARCH1–ARCH8. In relation to any development proposals, at however an early stage of preparation, within the ESG area, Herefordshire Council will be applying this national and local guidance and policy as appropriate.

3. It should be pointed out that the Herefordshire UDP will expire in March 2010, and will be replaced by the Hereford Area Plan (HAP). This will carry forward 'Herefordshire specific policies' while re-iterating government guidance (as with the forthcoming PPS on Planning and the Historic Environment). Further policies specific to protection and enhancement of the historic environment within the historic city core may feature within the new HAP.

4. Guidance and policy emphasise three fundamentals: firstly, that early discussions and archaeological information gathering (possibly extensive) are a pre-requisite of successful proposals; secondly that known remains of particular significance may need to be preserved *in situ*, in whole or in part; thirdly that where remains are present that do not merit preservation in situ, there may be a need to 'preserve by record' (ie by archaeological recording and excavation projects as normally understood).

5. As far as archaeological projects are concerned, it is important especially to remember the following:

- A developer or potential developer is responsible for discharging in full any condition that is attached to a planning permission (this includes the commissioning of any necessary archaeological projects);
- A project will not be regarded as complete until all project tasks including archiving and publication have been achieved and the relevant planning condition discharged;
- A project will need to comply with all relevant national and local standards and guidance;
- Archaeological projects are frequently complex and multi stage, taking appreciable time and resource to fully discharge;
- There will be a need to liaise with Herefordshire Council's Archaeological Adviser throughout.

Below ground archaeology: key issues

The most pressing immediate issue as regards below-ground archaeology, is the need noted above and in more detail below for more information regarding the nature of deposit profiles over most of the ESG area. Reliable information about below-ground deposits within the ESG area is currently very limited and will need to be improved at the planning and design stage, to reduce

archaeological risks. Once below-ground remains have been identified, the next key issue is to determine whether they merit preservation in situ or investigation and recording.

Historic buildings and archaeology, key issues

It is the case that, of the appreciable number of historic buildings present within the ESG area, very few are Listed, though more than thirty individual buildings, or groups of buildings, have been identified as being of local significance and interest (Buildings Conservation section, 2006). A significant issue is the lack of any comprehensive survey of buildings of likely interest, an issue of particular relevance to the main-street frontages (Commercial Road, Widemarsh Street) where the survival of early fabric may not be evident from the outside. The survey work already done in this area is of good quality, but more information will be needed to inform the planning process. There should be a strong preference throughout ESG for utilising the inherited historic building fabric and framework, particularly where this is of good quality and the relevant proposals have more general merit.

Key opportunities for historic assets enhancement

The *Blackfriars site* and its setting provide a much needed and historically valid open space at the heart of the ESG area. Its centrality within the regeneration area offers the prospect of re-creating it as a key focus of and landmark within the new townscape. However, its present relative seclusion and tranquillity are arguably qualities that should be enhanced rather than compromised (for example, by the creation of a paved 'precinct' at a nexus of pedestrian routes), suggesting that the design model to be pursued should be closer to that of – to put it in Metropolitan terms – the garden squares of the West End than to Covent Garden. Whatever the eventual design solution, it is essential that a long-term management plan is in place to deal with the upkeep and enhancement of the complex of important buildings here, a plan that sees beyond the immediate and seeks long-term benefits.

The *city walls* represent a particular opportunity. In one sense they are a barrier, the historic purpose and importance of which needs to be clearly signposted, even celebrated and enhanced. However, the walls were designed to allow controlled linkage with the 'outside'. As part of the developing ESG vision, it will be necessary to consider exactly how such linkages might be maintained and improved in the future, to the benefit of both the public using the linkages, and the historic environment through which they pass. There is no doubt that this is something of a challenge, but it is a major opportunity nevertheless.

The opportunities for the positive use of the site and fabric of the *historic canal* and its terminus should be regarded as a potential asset. The value of water as a design attribute for the northern half of the ESG area is considerable,

while the re-utilisation of the character lent by the configuration of the former canal basin would provide important local distinctiveness to new development.

Archaeology and design: positive place making

As implied above, it will be both necessary and desirable to facilitate appropriate linkages through the ESG area and beyond. It will also be desirable in some locations to achieve a strong sense of specific bounded 'places' including squares or plazas, where particular historic themes or characteristics are defined or emphasised. For example, this the currently ill-defined and somewhat chaotic precincts of Hereford Railway Station would benefit from an appropriate re-ordering, to make the most of the landmark station building itself and to improve the public domain at this most crucial access point to the city of Hereford

Archaeological risks and mitigation

Probably the greatest archaeological risk is that of an unexpected discovery of major archaeological importance, made at a late stage in the development process. Such a major and late discovery might effectively prevent development of an area, either because the intrinsic importance of the find might lead to the need for total archaeological preservation in situ, or because the costs of appropriate archaeological mitigation (excavations etc) would make any development financially unviable. The requirement to preserve sites or their settings/environs in situ is normally applied only to the most important of remains, and it is rare for the costs of archaeological mitigation to be so great that those costs alone would terminate a development proposal. By following proper procedures (see above), the risk of a problematic major find can be minimised. However, it can never be entirely removed. Contingency must be provided for in both programme and financial terms to deal with 'unexpected' discoveries

In addition, it needs to be emphasised that the technical and funding issues relating to localised preservation in situ / avoidance of archaeology by design are complex and difficult, and that the direct and indirect costs of archaeological mitigation can be appreciable. There are without question financial risks with any programme of archaeological work or any development programme that has an archaeological dimension.

Public archaeology

One, final, dimension of the ESG area needs consideration. It will be clear from this document, and from its predecessors, that, far from being an uninteresting 'brown field site' the ESG is rich in archaeological remains and has a considerable time-depth to its developmental history – above and beyond the 'showcase' sites of the Blackfriars, Coningsby's Hospital and the city walls. This should be presented to the general public and the future

residents of and workers in the regenerated area, by any or all of the following:

- Public information (interpretation/information panels)
- Public art, picking up historic/archaeological themes and discoveries
- A display space, for recovered finds
- Other forms of publication (printed and A/V material)
- Customised floorscaping in selected locations to reflect former plan-forms (e.g. demolished Blackfriars ranges), removed street-lines, notable boundaries

Detailed area assessments

The following section comprises outline archaeological assessments of each of the redevelopment parcels identified in the 2008 ESG Masterplan. Each parcel is first related to the townscape character areas (TCAs) identified in the 2007 *Archaeological Characterisation of the Edgar Street Grid* (Baker 2007) to locate it with reference to the townscape as it exists at present. The area assessments adopt a common format, each addressing in turn:

- the availability of archaeological information
- what the information tells us regarding buried archaeology, standing buildings and the landscape
- archaeological risks (the major 'known unknowns' and their implications);
- opportunities for heritage-led enhancement
- desirable outcomes
- an outline archaeological action-plan for each area.

The 'current level of understanding' of each area is coded poor, medium or good. *These are relative terms* – and have to be understood in the general context of an area that has seen not a single large-scale controlled excavation. Current archaeological knowledge is instead, everywhere within ESG, dependent upon a small number of very small-scale interventions, generally archaeological field evaluations (test trenches). Overall archaeological understanding of the area can be accurately characterised as poor – in comparison with, for example, parts of Hereford city that have seen a number of large-scale projects over the years. But, in detail, some areas within ESG are better understood than others, and it is to express this range of variation that these terms have been used.

In summary, areas with an archaeological understanding expressed as 'poor' are reliant on data derived solely from small-scale and distant investigations, those expressed as 'medium' have data derived from small-scale investigations closer to hand or where there are other indications (e.g. surface topography) that valid predictive extrapolations can be made from further afield; areas expressed as 'good' generally have had investigations within them or closely adjacent, though in all cases the scale of these investigations remains very small – almost universally test trenches.

Five-digit Herefordshire SMR reference numbers are given for all archaeological investigations reported here.

The commentary commences with an examination of the major infrastructure projects that are common to a number of individual development parcels.

1. Infrastructure projects

The Canal Park

The Canal Park, as presently defined, is mainly confined within the Barrs Court Trading Estate character area (TCA 3) and the Boothall Meadow, more commonly known at present as the Police Dog Training ground (TCA 9) although, in detail, it also cuts into the Widemarsh Street plots at their north end.

Current level of understanding and archaeological character: deposits

Medium. The Canal Park is entirely confined within the floodplain of the Widemarsh Brook. At its northern end it passes through part of the Barrs Court Trading Estate, known (via investigations on the Postal Sorting Office site) to contain deep deposits of 19th- and 20th-century made ground, overlying the alluvial deposits characteristic of the floodplain as a whole. These were examined in 2007 in the archaeological evaluation of the Police Dog Training Ground (Boothall Meadow), which, via fifteen machined trenches, gave an overview of the area through its broad coverage. However, the sample control was mostly vertical, that is, deposits were noted only in section. The depositional sequence was interpreted as reflecting early post-Glacial conditions with an overlay of later peat deposition followed by flood silting.

Other than the unknown factors associated with prehistoric alluvial deposits, there is also the question of the original, infilled, Hereford & Gloucester Canal, which the Canal Park will intersect at its northern end. The construction of the canal, the nature of its fill and its condition below ground are all unknown factors (see UV8 and UV9, below). See also the section on historic landscape, below.

Archaeological character: existing buildings

The proposed Canal Park coincides with two standing buildings, both of 20th-century date; neither appears on the Buildings of Interest list (Buildings Conservation Team 2006).

Archaeological character: historic landscape

While the bulk of the proposed Canal Park is confined within the historic meadow known variously as the Police Dog Training Ground, the Boothall Meadow and the Essex Arms Playing Fields (TCA9: Baker 2007) the west side of the park would, as proposed, effectively erase the historic back fence line defining the rear of the east-side Widemarsh Street plots. This is almost certainly of medieval date and is one of the most ancient landscape

boundaries within the ESG. It should also be noted that this boundary is known to have been defined by a watercourse running between the Widemarsh Brook to the north and the Tan Brook to the south. Cutting into this brook, and more particularly into the rear of the plots bounded by it, may additionally compromise substantial depths of stratified medieval deposit, the lower levels of which may be well preserved and waterlogged, with consequent survival of organic materials and objects.

Archaeological risks

- Unpredictable prehistoric activity sealed by floodplain peat deposits (see introduction)
- Unquantified archaeological deposit-depth associated with Widemarsh Street plots (may be c.3m)
- Unquantified extent of waterlogging in lowest cultural deposits
- Buried section of the canal likely to be encountered in any below-ground works; depth, structure and condition are unknown

Historic environment enhancement opportunities

- Possible daylighting of watercourses
- Possible reinforcement/reinstatement of historic rear boundary to Widemarsh Street plots emphasising their character and distinctiveness from their surroundings

Desirable outcomes

- Definition of purpose and form. It remains unclear at the present time what the purpose of a Canal Park in this location would be, without either the historic canal or a re-creation of it. Its purpose and design need re-definition. A desirable outcome in historical-environmental terms would be for the design of both the open space and the built-up areas framing it to be meaningfully rather than arbitrarily linked

Archaeological action plan

- Conduct further detailed scoping to specify the location and nature of further field data collection.
- On the basis of the above, design and commission field evaluations to more fully assess the character and scope of buried archaeological deposits

- Produce plans for mitigation and enhancement

The east-west link road

The link road, as presently defined, cuts through a number of existing character areas, from west to east: the Edgar Street commercial character area (TCA 6), Merton Meadow (TCA 7), the Widemarsh Street suburb (TCA 8), the Boothall Meadow/Police Dog Training ground (TCA 9), the Barrs Court Trading Estate (TCA 3) and Station Approach (TCA14).

Current level of understanding

Variable, from poor to medium along the length of the road corridor. Starting at the west (Edgar Street) end, the road passes through plots on Edgar Street first developed in the 1930s, then eastwards across the present Merton Meadow. These areas may be characterised as having a *poor* level of archaeological understanding, there having been no prior archaeological investigations within this area. Current understanding is confined to extrapolation from the present surface topography and from distant excavated samples, together with limited borehole data.

From Merton Meadow the road corridor passes through the plots of the medieval Widemarsh Street suburb. Archaeological understanding of this section may be characterised as *medium*, the road corridor lying to the north of a very limited excavated sample at 118 Widemarsh Street, which gave some indication as to the likely archaeological character of the suburb within the Widemarsh Brook floodplain (SMR 20110, 43805).

From Widemarsh Street, the road corridor crosses the Police Dog Training Ground (known historically as the Boothall Meadow). This was examined in 2007 in an archaeological evaluation consisting of fifteen machined trenches (SMR 44627), which gave a limited, though useful, sample of the floodplain deposits.

East of the meadow the road corridor passes longitudinally across the existing Barrs Court Trading Estate and into Station Approach, to connect with Commercial Road. Understanding of this part of the route may also be characterised as *medium*, in that it relies on investigations of limited scope in 1998 associated with the construction of the Postal Sorting Office (SMR 30004), together with the data on the underlying floodplain deposits from the Boothall Meadow/Police Dog Training Ground evaluation.

Archaeological character: deposits

The proposed link road is entirely contained within the floodplain of the Widemarsh Brook and in fact follows the main Widemarsh Brook channel, in

its various historical manifestations, quite closely: this is the principal underlying factor determining ground conditions along its corridor, including the formation and survival of archaeological deposits. As a very brief summary, the road will encounter, in order from west to east:

- floodplain deposits close to the surface
- floodplain deposits underlying deep medieval and later occupation
- floodplain deposits close to the surface
- floodplain deposits underlying deep 19th- and 20th-century 'made ground' (landfill and demolition materials).

The western end of the road corridor, from its junction with Edgar Street to the rear boundary of the Widemarsh Street plots, crosses ground that was, historically, all part of Merton Meadow. Formerly known as Merton Marsh, this has not been built up within the last eight or more centuries and no settlement evidence from this period is anticipated. Although the present channel of the Widemarsh Brook lies to the north, the road corridor coincides approximately with the line of the watercourse as it was before it was diverted sometime after 1855, presumably following the demolition of Widemarsh Mill just to the west of Edgar Street. The archaeological character of this old watercourse is unknown but it may include revetments or other features associated with the mill.

The probable depositional character of Widemarsh Street and its plots (assessed solely from limited investigations on one property, SMR 20110 and 43805) may be summarised as evidence of housing on the frontage with industrial activities in the back-plot areas behind, particularly tanning; timber-lined tanks and channels are highly probable, over a period extending back to the 12th or 13th centuries. Deposit depths are likely to range from a little over a metre to as much as three metres, with waterlogging in the lower strata and the consequent preservation of organic materials (timber, leatherwork, shoes).

Further east, the evaluation campaign in the Police Dog Training ground (SMR 44627, on the historical Boothall Meadow) encountered a shallow depth of topsoil over alluvial deposits, interpreted as reflecting early post-Glacial conditions with an overlay of later peat deposition followed by flood silting. Further east still, the road corridor passes across the Barrs Court Trading Estate, which originated as land acquired for the Hereford & Gloucester Canal in the 1840s. The road corridor intersects with this along the junction between the canal itself and the three wharves or basins that extended south from it. The buried remains of the canal terminus (infilled in stages, 1888-1904) have never been seen and the implications in terms of buried hard structures and soft fills are unknown.

Archaeological investigations during the construction of the Postal Sorting Office (SMR 30004) found, in four trenches 3-4 metres deep, modern landfill/demolition deposits varying between 0.78m and 2.5m in thickness,

overlying peat or organic silty clay deposits that were not bottomed but were more than 0.8m to 1.6m thick. Neither of the two trenches positioned over the line of the canal encountered its remains, either because the trenches were not deep enough or because the ground had been disturbed by a sewer or drains. At least a proportion of the recent rubble component of the landfill deposits on the site was ascribed by the investigators to the demolition of canal infrastructure. At its eastern end, in the Station Approach area, the road corridor lies close alongside the Widemarsh Brook where it bypasses and loops around the former Monkmoor Mill (under the north corner of the supermarket), the culverted channel underlying the north side of Morrison's car park before reuniting with the mill's tail-race (the Tan Brook) and passing under Commercial Road directly alongside the Station Approach road junction.

Archaeological character: buildings

The road corridor affects only 20th-century buildings, none of which appear on the Buildings of interest list (Buildings Conservation Team, 2006).

Archaeological character: historic landscape

The road cuts west-east across a variety of landscape types: open meadow, now car-parking; suburban tenements; open meadow, now playing fields; and a trading estate, formerly the canal terminus. The greatest challenge in terms of integrating the new road into the existing historic environment will probably be in accommodating it and its junction to the subtle curves of medieval Widemarsh Street. The greatest opportunity arguably lies in improving the setting of, and links to, the railway station.

Archaeological risks

- Unpredictable prehistoric activity sealed by floodplain peat deposits (see introduction)
- Unquantified archaeological deposit-depth associated with Widemarsh Street plots (approximately 1m minimum to c.3m)
- Unquantified extent of waterlogging in lowest cultural deposits – these could be expensive to examine or conserve

Historic environment enhancement opportunities

- Improvement of the setting of Barrs Court Station

Desirable outcomes

- Achieving design goal for the link road of east-west traffic flow while maintaining historic north-south pedestrian permeability through the ESG built-up area
- Collection of below-ground data from a complete transect across the Widemarsh floodplain in the ESG area at an early stage of the overall design and construction process

Archaeological action plan

- Design and commission archaeological field evaluations along the road corridor, to include the following specific targets: Merton Meadow and the pre-19th-century Widemarsh Brook channel; the Widemarsh Street suburban plots; the canal terminus
- Dependent on the basis of the results of the above, implement mitigation policy, either by preservation in situ or by recording action

Widemarsh Street

While Widemarsh Street is to be retained more or less in its present form and is not identified for major structural change, it is likely to be the subject of a variety of works with below-ground implications and, as it falls outside the scope of individual development parcels, is discussed here.

Current level of understanding

Poor. While investigations have taken place at one location on the street frontage north of Blackfriars Street (at no.118, just north of the Ambulance HQ site), there have been no investigations of the street itself. It is certainly of medieval origin and the location of the Hospital of St Sepulchre (re-founded first as St John's and then as Coningsby's Hospital) shows the road to have been extant by the 12th century. It is likely also to have been extant in the pre-Conquest period and an earlier origin, possibly in prehistory, cannot be ruled out.

Archaeological character: deposits

Widemarsh Street was, historically, the main approach road to Hereford from the north and, as its name suggests, it provided a route to the city across the Wide Marsh, the floodplain of the Widemarsh Brook. The floodplain is likely to extend northwards under the street from approximately the north side of the Wickes' DIY store, opposite no.118, at least as far as the end of the street at its junction with Newtown Road and the present Widemarsh Brook culvert.

This section of the road must have been built up on a causeway, though no such structure has ever been recorded. There are additionally two known points at which watercourses cross under the street: the present Widemarsh Brook culvert at the Newtown Road junction, and the crossing, or former crossing, of the Tan Brook somewhere between Tanbrook Villas on the east side (nos.130-132) and the south side of the garage on the west side. Experience elsewhere suggests that such crossing points may be associated with structural remains, specifically bridges trapped underground as levels are raised and watercourses culverted (as in, e.g., London, Shrewsbury, Walsall). The identity of one medieval bridge is known – Barr Bridge – from documentary evidence, though it is currently uncertain which (assuming it's one or the other) of the two known watercourse crossings this name refers to.

Archaeological character: historic landscape

The sinuous line of the street is significant, the principal bend – just north of the Wickes' DIY site – marking the point at which dry land is reached after crossing the Wide Marsh. This is a distinctive feature of the street's present day character, generating a sense of expectation and surprise approaching from the north as Coningsby's Hospital and the more urban townscape beyond are brought into view.



The Widemarsh Street suburb snaking northwards through the ESG, the closer urban grain of the medieval street contrasting with the open areas either side

Archaeological risks

- Unidentified deep deposits and retaining structures associated with the maintenance of the route over the marsh (a causeway), over an unknown period of time
- Unidentified structural remains at the watercourse crossings

Historic environment enhancement opportunities

- Possible daylighting of watercourses
- Reinstatement of street frontage lines in new builds to enhance the character and distinctiveness of the historic street, preserving the best aspects of the current streetscape and the suburban to urban transition from north to south

Desirable outcomes

- Reinforcement of the historic character of Widemarsh Street as the principal route through ESG into the city, exhibiting an increasing density of building from north (suburban/fringe-belt) to south (fully urban)
- Retrieval of archaeological data bearing upon the engineering solutions to one of the city's longest-running infrastructure requirements: i.e. access across the Wide Marsh

Archaeological action plan

- Commission archaeological monitoring of any below-ground engineering work on Widemarsh Street and the watercourse crossings

2. Individual development parcels: The Urban Village

UV1

The main body of this parcel is situated within Merton Meadow (TCA 7) with an extension west alongside the proposed link road onto Edgar Street (TCA 5) and east onto Widemarsh Street (TCA 8).

Current level of understanding

Poor. There have been no prior archaeological investigations within this area. Archaeological understanding is based on: extrapolation from surface topography, limited borehole data, distant excavated samples, the present and mapped townscape and historical evidence. At present this understanding is of little help in guiding development and assessing impacts. More assessment and data gathering is needed.

Archaeological character: deposits

The underlying archaeological character of this parcel is determined by its location wholly within the floodplain of the Widemarsh Brook. Additionally, the eastern arm of the area extends up to Widemarsh Street and will therefore cover an area of past and present suburban house plots and industrial infrastructure developed over a likely c.800-year period back from the present.

Merton Meadow, formerly known as Merton Marsh, has not been built up within the historic period and no settlement evidence is anticipated from this period. Although the development parcel is bisected by the Widemarsh Brook, the present channel is a 19th-century diversion from an original or earlier channel further to the south (see Link Road section); the short length of silted-up channel running north-south at the rear of the Widemarsh Street may be of earlier date. Archaeological remains associated with ancient water management works (former channels, revetments, weirs, sluices) are unlikely except at the extreme south-west corner of this development parcel, adjacent to Edgar Street and in closest proximity to the site of the medieval and later Widemarsh Mill west of Edgar Street.

Peat deposits are present in this area, having been located in a 1968 geotechnical investigation when the present car park was created (Baker 2007, 17; Roberts 2001, 82). The possible implications of these are discussed in the general introduction (above).

The archaeological character of the Widemarsh Street suburb where it impinges on the floodplain has been tested at only one location, 118 Widemarsh Street, just north of the St John's Ambulance site (SMR 20110 and 43805). The investigations revealed evidence of early post-medieval housing on the frontage with industrial activities in the back-plot area behind, specifically evidence of tanning and an timber-lined water channel. Much of the stratigraphy was waterlogged, with excellent preservation of organic materials in the lower levels (timber, leatherwork, shoes). Archaeological deposits were thick: down to 1.2m below ground level at the frontage descending to 2.8m below the surface at the rear. Such conditions are in general terms likely to apply to the Widemarsh plots throughout this development parcel.

Archaeological character: existing buildings

Building cover is limited to 20th-century commercial buildings on the Widemarsh Street and Edgar Street frontages. No Buildings of Interest as defined by the Buildings Conservation Team (2006) are present in this development parcel.

Archaeological character: historic landscape

The plots fronting Widemarsh Street have probably inherited boundaries dating to the creation of the suburb in the 12th-13th centuries and integrated with water channels servicing industrial functions, mostly tanning, located in the back-plot areas.

Archaeological risks

- Unpredictable prehistoric activity sealed by floodplain peat deposits (see introduction)
- Unquantified archaeological deposit-depth associated with Widemarsh Street plots (approximately 1m minimum to c.3m)
- Unquantified extent of waterlogging in lowest cultural deposits – these could be expensive to examine or conserve
- Fragility of archaeological resource as a consequence of de-watering (see introduction)

Historic environment enhancement opportunities

- Reinstatement/reinforcement of the historic back-fence boundary line to the Widemarsh Street suburban plots to emphasise character of the historic suburb in distinction to surrounding meadowland, and to restore a sense of enclosure along Widemarsh Street
- Daylighting culverted sections and reinstating silted-up sections of watercourses to add interest, focus and containment to new townscape, to reinforce the historic character of the area and to enhance the habitat diversity of the natural environment

Desirable outcomes

- Mitigation of the impact of new building by preservation of remains in situ or by archaeological recording (see below)

- In new building, reinforcement/restoration of historic townscape character differences between constituent parts of the ESG

Archaeological action plan

- Conduct further detailed scoping to specify the location and nature of field data collection
- On the basis of the above, design and commission field evaluation within Merton Meadow to locate floodplain peat deposits and sample in plan at an early stage of the design process
- On the basis of the results of further field evaluation, design archaeological mitigation strategy around either preservation of archaeological remains in situ, or preservation by record (further archaeological excavation).

UV2

This parcel is wholly contained within the Widemarsh Street character area (TCA 8), representing the last two east-side plots at the northern end of the suburb

Current level of understanding

Poor to medium. There have been no prior archaeological investigations within this parcel: archaeological understanding is based on the historic landscape and on extrapolation from archaeological field evaluations at no.118 Widemarsh Street, c.160 metres to the south.

Archaeological character: deposits

The landscape features of this development parcel indicate that it falls within the historic Widemarsh Street suburb. The archaeological character of the suburb where it impinges on the floodplain has been tested at 118 Widemarsh Street, just north of the St John's Ambulance site (SMR 20110 and 43805). The investigations revealed evidence of housing on the frontage with industrial activities in the back-plot area behind, specifically evidence of tanning and a timber-lined water channel. Much of the stratigraphy was waterlogged, with excellent preservation of organic materials in the lower levels (timber, leatherwork, shoes). Archaeological deposits were deep: 1.2m at the frontage descending to 2.8m at the rear. Such conditions may well pertain to parcel UV2, but this is not certain: medieval occupation has not yet been proved north of the Widemarsh Brook/Tan Brook crossing (between 130 and 158 Widemarsh Street). There is a high probability of an infilled watercourse of likely medieval date along the rear boundary of the existing

plots, possibly with deep and waterlogged deposits, though the date at which such a feature may have been backfilled is uncertain. The lowest levels may include prehistoric peat deposits associated with the Widemarsh Brook floodplain.

Archaeological character: existing buildings

The five standing buildings within this parcel are all of 20th-century date; none are on the Building Conservation Team's (2006) Buildings of Interest list.

Archaeological character: historic landscape

Although archaeological dating evidence is absent, the plots form part of the medieval Widemarsh suburb. It is likely that their common rear boundary is of medieval (probably 12th-century) date and was probably originally defined by a watercourse. The lateral boundaries of the plots may also be of medieval origin, their irregular plan reflecting a greater concern for access to and the manipulation of water channels than with regular planning.

Archaeological risks

- Unpredictable prehistoric activity sealed by floodplain peat deposits
- Unquantified archaeological deposit-depth and uncertain duration of occupation in this area
- Unquantified extent of waterlogging in lowest cultural deposits
- Fragility of archaeological resource as a consequence of de-watering (see introduction)

Historic environment enhancement opportunities

- Reinstatement/reinforcement of the historic back-fence boundary line to the Widemarsh Street suburban plots to emphasise character of the historic suburb in distinction to surrounding meadowland, and to restore a sense of enclosure along Widemarsh Street
- Daylighting culverted sections and reinstating silted-up sections of watercourses to add interest, focus and containment to new townscape, to reinforce the historic character of the area and to enhance the habitat diversity of the natural environment

Desirable outcomes

- Mitigation of the impact of new building, either by preservation of archaeological deposits in situ (by design of new build) or by further archaeological investigation
- Reinforcement/restoration of historic townscape character
- If further archaeological investigation is required, its objectives should include the recovery of data bearing on the date, function, fluctuations in the extent of and character of the Widemarsh Street suburb.

Archaeological action plan

- Conduct further detailed scoping to specify the location and nature of field data collection
- On the basis of the above, design and commission archaeological field evaluation (test trenches) within the historic plots on the east side of Widemarsh Street, to sample (1) deposits/sequence on the street frontage; (2) probable industrial activities in the body of the plot; (3) rear boundary sequence and probable infilled watercourse following it
- Dependent on the basis of the results of the above, implement a mitigation policy, either by preservation of archaeological remains in situ or by recording action (excavation)

UV3 and UV4

These parcels are mostly coterminous with the Barrs Court Trading Estate (TCA 3), although the southern edge of UV3 extends south into the Boothall Meadow (the Police Dog Training ground, TCA 9).

Current level of understanding

Medium. Understanding of these parcels derives from nearby field evaluations and other small-scale recording: to the south-east (within UV 9) on the construction of the Postal Sorting Office in 1998 (SMR 30004), and to the south (within UV8 and the canal corridor) in Boothall Meadow (the police dog training ground) (SMR 44627).

Archaeological character: deposits

In summary, the depositional character of these development parcels is that of a substantial depth of 19th- and 20th-century landfill over alluvial floodplain deposits. Investigations made when the Postal Sorting Office was built

revealed average depths of 2.5 metres of modern (mostly 19th- and 20th-century) landfill and rubble over peat, or peaty silt-clay with a high organic content, the top of such deposits being recorded at around 49 metres AOD (SMR 30004). Fifteen machined evaluation trenches in the Police Dog Training Ground (Boothall Meadow) in 2007 (SMR 44627) gave a better, though also sectional, sample of the alluvial deposits without the post-medieval material dumped on top. In summary (see Introduction for further information) the depositional sequence was interpreted as reflecting early post-Glacial conditions with an overlay of later peat deposition followed by flood silting.

These parcels also contain a substantial length of the former Gloucester & Hereford Canal of 1844-5 and the northern part of its terminus, infilled in stages between 1888 and 1904. Two areas of the Postal Sorting Office investigations lay over the course of the canal but could not identify its remains, probably on account, in the first trench, of disturbance by a modern sewer and, in the second, by the limited depth of excavation. At least a proportion of the recent rubble component of the landfill deposits on the site was ascribed by the investigators to the demolition of canal infrastructure.

Archaeological character: existing buildings

All of the buildings within these development parcels are late 20th-century commercial structures; none are included on the Buildings of Interest list (Conservation Section 2006)

Archaeological character: historic landscape

The outer boundaries of these development parcels are of modern or relatively modern origin, the northern side being determined by the railway station of the early 1850s, the southern side by the line of the link road, part of the present ESG design.

Archaeological risks

- Unpredictable prehistoric activity sealed by floodplain peat deposits

Historic environment enhancement opportunities

- Recreation of canal using original structure

Desirable outcomes

- Mitigation of the impact of new building: archaeological investigation to retrieve data (where preservation in situ not an option) on the floodplain and its overlying industrial archaeology
- Recreation of section of historic canal

Archaeological action plan

- Conduct further detailed scoping to specify the location and nature of field data collection.
- On the basis of the above, design and commission archaeological evaluation to determine the survival and condition of the Hereford & Gloucester Canal
- Dependent on the basis of the results of the above, implement an archaeological mitigation policy, either by preservation in situ or by recording action

UV5

This parcel is divided between Merton Meadow (TCA 7) and the Edgar Street (commercial) character area (TCA 6).

Current level of understanding

Poor. There have been no prior archaeological investigations within this area. Archaeological understanding is based on: extrapolation from surface topography and limited borehole data out of the area, with cartographic and historical evidence.

Archaeological character: deposits

Merton Meadow, formerly known as Merton Marsh, has not been built up within the medieval to modern periods and no settlement evidence is anticipated from this period. Peat deposits are probably present in this area, having been located further north (UV 1) in a 1968 geotechnical investigation when the present car park was created (Baker 2007, 17; Roberts 2001, 82). The possible implications of these are discussed in the general introduction (above). The present course of the Widemarsh Brook (within UV 1) is a mid-19th-century diversion of an earlier channel that ran more or less along the projected route of the east-west link road separating UV1 from this parcel.

More predictable archaeological issues arise on the southern and south-western margins of this development parcel, associated with the close

proximity of the former Widemarsh Mill, out of the ESG just to the west of Edgar Street, south of Prior Street. The All Saints' parish Tithe map of 1841-44 shows the Widemarsh Brook leaving the mill and immediately dividing into two, one arm heading north-east before turning east across the meadow, the other looping south to join what was, in the mid-19th century, a diagonal NW-SE field boundary, though in origin it had probably been a subsidiary watercourse following the southern edge of the Widemarsh floodplain, possibly continued to the east by the infilled medieval channel identified in investigations at 118 Widemarsh Street. This boundary has been retained in the landscape as the northern boundary of the football ground property immediately behind (north of) the north stand. The connecting loop can be accurately located on the ground from the survival to 1929 of the parish boundary that followed it. From this it can be seen to pass through the present forecourt of the garage on Edgar Street (opposite nos. 101-123 Edgar Street). While, in such a position, buried remains of a channel would be unlikely to have survived the usual garage forecourt underground storage tanks, the diagonal NW-SE boundary impinges (just) on this parcel and should be unencumbered and uncompromised by subsequent developments. Archaeological remains (former channel revetments, weirs, sluices) may be present, together with deep and possibly waterlogged pre-mid-19th-century deposits filling the suspected floodplain-edge channel.

Archaeological character: existing buildings

There are no buildings within the main body of this parcel (Merton Meadow, TCA 7). The buildings occupying plots along Edgar Street date from the 1930s on; none appear on the Buildings of Interest list (Buildings Conservation Team 2006).

Archaeological character: historic landscape

The principal existing boundary running through this development parcel is the common rear boundary to the properties fronting Edgar Street; this does not pre-date the building cover and is of no great historical significance. Of greater significance is the diagonal boundary on the north side of the football ground, which may reflect historic (medieval?) water management regimes in the Widemarsh Brook floodplain.

Archaeological risks

- Unpredictable prehistoric activity sealed by floodplain peat deposits (see introduction)
- Unpredicted structures and infilled watercourses on west side and south-west corner of UV 5 associated with former Widemarsh Mill.

Historic environment enhancement opportunities

- Achievement of new-build scale and density to enhance rather than blight/overshadow adjoining mainly Victorian residential areas west of Edgar Street outside ESG

Desirable outcomes

- Mitigation of impact of new building on any deposits identified by evaluation, by either preservation in situ or 'preservation by record' via further archaeological investigation

Archaeological action plan

- Conduct further detailed scoping to specify the location and nature of field data collection.
- On the basis of the above, design and commission field evaluation trenches close to historic course of the Widemarsh Brook (north side of UV 5)
- Dependent on the basis of the results of the above, implement an archaeological mitigation policy, either by preservation in situ or by recording action

UV6

This parcel is almost equally divided between the Widemarsh Street character area (TCA 8) and the eastern side of Merton Meadow (TCA 7).

Current level of understanding

Poor. There have been no prior archaeological investigations within this area. Archaeological understanding is based on: extrapolation from surface topography, limited borehole data in adjacent areas, one excavated sample within an adjacent area (UV 13), the present and mapped townscape and historical evidence.

Archaeological character: deposits

The basic underlying archaeological character of this parcel is determined by its location wholly within the floodplain of the Widemarsh Brook. Additionally, the eastern arm of the area extends up to Widemarsh Street and will therefore cover an area of past and present suburban house plots and industrial

infrastructure superimposed on the floodplain and developed over a likely c.800-year period.

Merton Meadow, formerly known as Merton Marsh, has not been built up within the historical period (i.e. since c.1200) and no settlement evidence is anticipated from this period. This parcel includes a section of former watercourse known as the Tan Brook running south from the present Widemarsh Brook along the back of the Widemarsh Street plots before turning east, between the plots (around the south side of the present garage by the Merton Meadow access road), before crossing under Widemarsh Street. As this watercourse was mapped as late as 1937, its filling will presumably be later than that date and not itself of archaeological interest; it may however represent a diversion of other, earlier channels, and highlights the probability of waterlogged deposits in the immediate vicinity. Such conditions have been demonstrated on the east side of Widemarsh Street, at no.118, where deposit depths ranged from 1.2m to 2.8m at the rear, with waterlogging of the lowest strata and an infilled water channel whose timber lining, and organic contents, were well preserved in the damp ground (SMR 20110 and 43805).

Archaeological character: existing buildings

The existing buildings here are all of 20th-century date and do not appear on the buildings of interest list (Building Conservation Team 2006).

Archaeological character: historic landscape

The strongest and most important boundary running through this development parcel is the north-south boundary line, fairly certainly of medieval date, delineating the rear of the Widemarsh Street plots. The boundary, which consists of free-standing boundary walls (mostly brick, but one of stone) and the back walls of buildings, is also accompanied by a rise in ground level varying between 0.3m and 1.0m up from Merton Meadow into the plots. The best-preserved historic plots on Widemarsh Street lie outside this development parcel; any original party boundaries between plots within the parcel under discussion have been removed by post-war redevelopment.

Archaeological risks

- Unpredictable prehistoric activity sealed by floodplain peat deposits
- Unquantified archaeological deposit-depth associated with the Widemarsh Street plots
- Undocumented, unpredicted former watercourses running through Widemarsh Street plots

- Unquantified extent of waterlogging in lowest cultural deposits
- Fragility of archaeological resource as a consequence of de-watering (see introduction)

Historic environment enhancement opportunities

- Reinstatement/reinforcement of the historic back-fence boundary line to the Widemarsh Street suburban plots to emphasise character of the historic suburb in distinction to surrounding meadowland, and to restore a sense of enclosure along Widemarsh Street
- Daylighting culverted sections and reinstating silted-up sections of watercourses to add interest, focus and containment to new townscape, to reinforce the historic character of the area and to enhance the habitat diversity of the natural environment

Desirable outcomes

- Mitigation of impact of new building, particularly along Widemarsh Street, either by preservation of archaeological deposits in situ (via design of new buildings) or by further archaeological recording
- If further recording is required, its objectives should include gathering further data on the date, character of, fluctuations in the extent/density of and activities within the Widemarsh Street suburb
- Preservation and enhancement in new design of essential historic character differences between Widemarsh Street and the former surrounding open meadow

Archaeological action plan

- Conduct further detailed scoping to specify the location and nature of field data collection.
- On this basis, design and commission field evaluation on the Widemarsh Street frontage
- Design and commission field evaluation in the interior of the Widemarsh Street plots
- Design and commission evaluation along the historic common boundary to the rear of the Widemarsh Street plots

- Dependent on the basis of the results of the above, implement an archaeological mitigation policy, either by preservation in situ or by recording action

UV7

This parcel is almost wholly contained within the Widemarsh Street character area, though (as currently drafted – January 09) its southern end strays into the adjacent area, the Police Dog Training Ground (Boothall Meadow, TCA 9). The discussion that follows assumes that this parcel is or will be coterminous with the Widemarsh Street plots.

Current level of understanding

Medium. This parcel lies immediately north of the excavated sample at 118 Widemarsh Street; its topography is a continuation of that found just to the south and it is not unreasonable to assume that its depositional characteristics are similar.

Archaeological character: deposits

The depositional character of the east side of Widemarsh Street has been summarised already: evidence of housing on the frontage with industrial activities in the back-plot area behind, specifically, tanning and an timber-lined water channel. Archaeological deposits were 1.2m deep at the frontage descending to 2.8m at the rear. Much of the stratigraphy was waterlogged, with excellent preservation of organic materials in the lower levels (timber, leatherwork, shoes) (SMR 20110 and 43805). In addition, this area is bisected by the line of the Tan Brook, which crosses the road diagonally and forms part of the southern boundary of no. 130 (Tanbrook Villas). Although the post-war infilling and/or culverting of this watercourse are not themselves of archaeological significance, the line of the channel may be ancient and accompanied by deeper deposits in its vicinity and/or remains of former revetments.

Archaeological character: existing buildings

The standing buildings in this parcel are mostly of the 20th century, with a minority of 19th-century date. Some appear on the Buildings of Interest list (Building Conservation Team 2006): Tanbrook Villas; the Antiques Centre no.128, with the adjoining building to the south, no.126, and a terrace of three properties, 158-162, to the north.

Archaeological character: historic landscape

Although not well represented in architectural terms, the plan-form of the medieval Widemarsh suburb is both distinctive and well preserved. The common rear boundary to the southern east-side plots was until recently marked by the Tan Brook, and the whole plot series from north to south may well once have been similarly arranged, the plots backing onto a common water supply linking the Tan Brook and the Widemarsh Brook to the north. The internal boundaries between individual plots remain distinctively irregular and suggest an origin in which all or most of the plots were arranged to have access to running water. The northward deflection of the plots containing 122-128 Widemarsh Street certainly suggests they were arranged to back on to the Tan Brook.

Archaeological risks

- Unpredictable prehistoric activity sealed by floodplain peat deposits
- Unquantified archaeological deposit-depth associated with Widemarsh Street plots
- Undocumented, unpredicted former watercourses running through Widemarsh Street plots
- Unquantified extent of waterlogging in lowest cultural deposits
- Fragility of archaeological resource as a consequence of de-watering (see introduction)

Historic environment enhancement opportunities

- Reinstatement/reinforcement of the historic boundaries of the Widemarsh Street plots to emphasise the distinctive character of the medieval suburb and its difference from the new developments surrounding it
- Daylighting culverted sections and reinstating silted-up sections of watercourses to add interest, focus and containment to new townscape, to reinforce the historic character of the area and to enhance the habitat diversity of the natural environment

Desirable outcomes

- Mitigation of impacts on the archaeological resource
- Preservation and reinforcement of the surviving historic morphology of the watered plot system

- Dependent on the basis of the results of the above, implement an archaeological mitigation policy, either by preservation in situ or by recording action
- If further recording action is found to be necessary, objectives for the recovery of data should include the exploration of medieval water-based industrial activities and the investigation of the inception of settlement in this floodplain location, together with possible fluctuations in the extent and density of settlement

Archaeological action plan

- Conduct further detailed scoping to specify the location and nature of field data collection.
- On the basis of further scoping, design and commission field evaluations on the Widemarsh Street frontage, in the interior of the Widemarsh Street plots and down to the common boundary to the rear of the plots.
- Dependent on the basis of the results of the above, implement an archaeological mitigation policy, either by preservation in situ or by recording action

UV8

This parcel is divided almost equally between the Police Dog Training Ground (Boothall Meadow, TCA 9) on the west and the Barrs Court Trading Estate (TCA 3) to the east.

Current level of understanding

Medium. While the open meadow, the Police Dog Training ground, has been thoroughly evaluated through archaeologically recorded machine trenching (SMR 44627), the limitations of such purely sectional information for detecting possible prehistoric activity sealed by peat deposits have already been expressed. The same applies to the much more inaccessible peat deposits known to underlie the recent made ground of the Barrs Court Trading Estate

Archaeological character: deposits

The dominant depositional characteristic of this area is that of alluvial deposits, including peat, within the floodplain of the Widemarsh Brook. That part that falls within the meadow/playing fields has a limited depth of topsoil cover while that part that falls within the Barrs Court Trading Estate lies below

an additional depth of c.1.4m to 2.5m of modern (19th- and 20th-century) made-up ground. This development parcel includes substantial parts of the terminus wharfs of the Hereford & Gloucester Canal, disused and filled-in in stages between 1888 and 1904. These canal structures – assuming they still survive underground – have never been examined archaeologically, though their remains should lie at the base of the made ground that seems to be characteristic of the trading estate which grew up around them and then outlived them.

Archaeological character: existing buildings

All structures in this area are of 20th-century date; none are included on the Buildings of Interest list (Building Conservation Team 2006)

Archaeological character: historic landscape

The only extant boundary within this area distinguishes the unimproved meadow on the west from the trading estate to the east, the latter evolved from the canal terminus site of the mid-19th century. The boundary, running roughly north-south, follows the Widemarsh Brook as it turns to rejoin the Tan Brook, just north-east of the Blackfriars site. This section of the Widemarsh Brook appears to be of ancient origin as it carried the parish boundary between All Saints' and St Peter's parishes and should therefore have been extant in the 11th century if not before. The boundary is therefore of some historic significance.

Archaeological risks

- Unpredictable prehistoric activity sealed by floodplain peat deposits
- Buried sections of the canal wharfs likely to be encountered; depth, structure and condition are unknown

Historic environment enhancement opportunities

- Retention and improvement of historic section of Widemarsh Brook
- Re-establishment of the canal basin or a section of it

Desirable outcomes

- Mitigation of impact of new building on the industrial archaeology of this area

- Renewed emphasis on water in the final design, through the improvement of the Widemarsh Brook and/or via the re-opening of the canal

Archaeological action plan

- Conduct further detailed scoping to specify location and nature of field data collection
- Design and commission field evaluation to test survival and condition of canal basin and associated structures
- Dependent on the basis of the results of the above, implement an archaeological mitigation policy, either by preservation in situ or by recording action

UV9

This parcel is wholly contained within the Barrs Court Trading Estate (TCA 3).

Current level of understanding

Medium. As in the preceding areas, archaeological understanding of this development parcel depends on two investigations: the evaluation of the Police Dog Training Ground for the underlying floodplain deposits, and operations during the construction of the Postal Sorting Office for the overlying made ground of the Barrs Court Trading Estate.

Archaeological character: deposits

The basic depositional character of the whole of this development parcel is that of alluvial deposits, including peat, within the floodplain of the Widemarsh Brook, overlain by a substantial depth (c.1.4m to 2.5m) of recent made ground (dumped materials). This parcel includes about half of the three docks that comprised the terminus wharfs of the Hereford & Gloucester Canal, disused and filled-in in stages between 1888 and 1904. The canal structures have never been examined archaeologically, though their remains should lie at the base of the made ground that distinguishes the Barrs Court Trading Estate.

Archaeological character: existing buildings

All structures in this area are of 20th-century date; none are included on the buildings of interest list (Buildings Conservation Team 2006)

Archaeological character: historic landscape

The development parcel is wholly contained within the trading estate, which derives from the canal terminus of the 1840s: none of its landscape features pre-date the mid-19th century. The strongest existing boundary within this area is the diagonal NW-SE boundary separating the Sorting Office from the Jewson's timber yard site. The boundary itself post-dates the 1937 4th edition O.S. plan, though its alignment derives from earlier sorting office buildings. It is therefore of very limited historical or townscape significance.

Archaeological risks

- Unpredictable prehistoric activity sealed by floodplain peat deposits (see introduction)
- Buried sections of the canal wharfs likely to be encountered; depth, structure and condition are unknown

Historic environment enhancement opportunities

- Renewal of all or part of the canal wharfs, or, reflection of the canal wharfs in final design e.g. through floorscaping or other interpretative treatment

Desirable outcomes

- Mitigation of the impact of new building on the industrial archaeology of this area
- Renewed emphasis on water in the final design, through the improvement of the Widemarsh Brook and/or via the re-opening of the canal

Archaeological action plan

- Conduct further detailed scoping to specify location and nature of field data collection
- Design and commission field evaluation to test survival and condition of canal basin and associated structures
- Dependent on the basis of the results of the above, implement an archaeological mitigation policy, either by preservation in situ or by recording action

UV10

Although this parcel is almost wholly contained within the Widemarsh Street character area (TCA 8), it covers a narrow strip of ground outside and to the west of the Widemarsh Street plots. It is bounded on the west side by the HUFC parcel and extends north into the Widemarsh floodplain (the Merton Meadow character area, TCA 7).

Current level of understanding and archaeological character: deposits

Poor. The surface topography within UV10 suggests that it occupies a floodplain-edge position, represented by a slight slope down to the north, alongside the north end of the Football Ground, from the higher level of the linear car park to the lower level of Merton Meadow. There are indications that the northern edge of the football ground marks a former water channel flowing eastwards along the edge of the floodplain at the base of the slope (see UV 6). No archaeological investigations have taken place in, or in the vicinity of UV10, or in a comparable topographical location, other than well within the floodplain east of Widemarsh Street (the Police Dog Training Ground/Boothall Meadow, SMR 44627) and in Widemarsh Street itself (no.118: SMR 20110, 43805). The area appears always to have been open ground. While no substantial depth of deposit is to be expected, the floodplain-edge situation must be regarded as potentially sensitive, for unpredictable prehistoric and possibly medieval activity.

Archaeological character: existing buildings

There is one permanent building in this parcel, of 20th-century date, which does not appear on the buildings of interest list (Building Conservation Team 2006).

Archaeological character: historic landscape

UV10 is entirely contained within former open ground to the west of the Widemarsh Street. The parcel contains no historic boundaries, though its eastern arms terminate approximately on the historic back-fence line bounding the Widemarsh Street plots.

Archaeological risks

- Unpredictable prehistoric activity on the gravel terrace-floodplain interface
- Unpredictable medieval activity on the gravel terrace-floodplain interface. This could include the first (13th-century), temporary site of

th century

- Possible engineered (revetted) channel at the base of the gradient potentially containing waterlogged deposits

Historic environment enhancement opportunities

- Reinstatement of former back-fence line to the Widemarsh suburb plots on the eastern edge of this development parcel

Desirable outcomes

- Determine whether or not this floodplain-edge location was exploited for settlement, either in the prehistoric period or as the first, temporary, site of the Blackfriars in the 13th century (see introduction)

Archaeological action plan

- Conduct further detailed scoping to specify location and nature of field data collection
- Design and commission field evaluation trenches to test for activity on the edge of the gravel terrace and to examine the suspected floodplain edge channel and its deposits
- Dependent on the basis of the results of the above, implement an archaeological mitigation policy, either by preservation in situ or by recording action

UV11

This parcel is divided equally between the Widemarsh Street character area (TCA 8) and the Widemarsh Street Schools character area (TCA 15). However, these character areas were defined principally on the basis of current land uses – the education centre in the eastern half, a commercial building in the western half – whereas in terms of historic landscape, the division is between former open agricultural land (western half) and Widemarsh Street suburban plots (eastern half).

Current level of understanding

Poor to medium, despite the proximity of a number of evaluation trenches to the west and south-west undertaken during the evaluation of the Cattle Market site in 2006 and 2007 (SMR 44131, 44732). The extent to which

archaeological deposits survive within former Widemarsh Street plots, under and around the school buildings, is unknown.

Archaeological character: deposits

The 2006 Cattle Market evaluation found, a few metres west of the entrance on Blackfriars Street, a pit cut into the natural gravel containing pottery and other material dated to the late Neolithic or early Bronze Age, roughly 2500 BC (SMR 44131) This was an isolated find: with the possible exception of a pair of stake-holes, buried under subsoil and cut into natural gravel, found in a 2007 evaluation trench 40 metres to the south east (SMR 44732), no other evaluation trenches found evidence of prehistoric occupation or activity. Nevertheless, it is highly unlikely that the 2006 Beaker-period pit was, in reality, an isolated feature; it is more probable that it is indicative of settlement somewhere in the vicinity, yet to be located. A 2007 evaluation trench immediately west of UV11 found natural gravel at a depth of 1.2m below subsoil deposits but no further archaeological material.

No evaluations or other excavations are directly relevant to below-ground conditions to be expected on or approaching the Widemarsh Street frontage. Nevertheless, outside the footprint of the 1911 Boys' School, and its attendant buried services, evidence of medieval suburban occupation and housing should be anticipated.

Archaeological character: existing buildings

The Education Centre was built as a Boys' School in 1911 by the architect Gavin Jack. The original block on the frontage is of high quality and appears on the buildings of interest list as worthy of retention (Conservation Section 2006). The later extensions to the rear, of poorer quality, are regarded as being less significant.

Archaeological character: historic landscape

UV 11 probably cuts across the historic back-fence line of the Widemarsh Street plots, though the tithe maps of 1841-44 show that this area was by then open land and gardens, any suburban plots having disappeared long before the school was built. The present boundaries of this area mostly post-date the building of the school in 1911.

Archaeological risks

- Unpredictable but potentially highly significant prehistoric activity (possibly late Neolithic/early Bronze Age) in the general vicinity of the pit found within the Cattle Market entrance on Blackfriars Street

- Unknown survival of medieval suburban tenements and associated deposits on the Widemarsh Street frontage

Historic environment enhancement opportunities

- Retention and enhancement of the most significant/distinguished 1911 school buildings

Desirable outcomes

- Determine whether prehistoric activity implied by the discovery nearby of the Beaker-period pit lies within this area

Archaeological action plan

- Conduct further detailed scoping to specify location and nature of field data collection
- Design and commission field evaluation trenches to test for activity on the gravel terrace
- In the event of new building within the curtilage of the Education Centre, design and commission field evaluation trenches to test for surviving deposits associated with medieval suburban occupation along Widemarsh Street.
- Devise and implement archaeological mitigation strategy based on the results of the evaluation, either by preservation in situ of archaeological remains or 'preservation by record' via recovery by excavation

UV12

This parcel is wholly contained within the Widemarsh Street character area (TCA 8).

Current level of understanding

Medium to good: the only archaeological investigations in this part of Widemarsh Street took place at no.118, directly opposite this redevelopment parcel.

Archaeological character: deposits

Archaeological investigations on the opposite side of Widemarsh Street (SMR 20110, 43805) show that UV12 lies within the medieval suburb and the

floodplain of the Widemarsh Brook. A deposit depth of over one metre is to be anticipated on the street frontage, possibly increasing towards the back of the plot, containing evidence for suburban occupation (housing) and industry (principally tanning). Additionally, it is not improbable that an infilled medieval water channel found running east-west in the work at no.118 passes through UV12, possibly linking with the suspected floodplain-edge channel west of the suburb (see UV6, UV10). If so, this may indicate a band of deeper, waterlogged archaeological deposits with well-preserved organic contents.

Archaeological character: existing buildings

There are no standing buildings within UV12

Archaeological character: historic landscape

This very small parcel falls entirely within the Widemarsh Street suburb, but has no surviving ancient landscape features within its bounds.

Archaeological risks

- Unpredictable prehistoric activity sealed by floodplain peat deposits
- Uncertain archaeological deposit-depth associated with Widemarsh Street plots
- Possibility of former watercourse running through this area
- Uncertain extent of waterlogging in lowest cultural deposits
- Fragility of archaeological resource as a consequence of de-watering (see introduction)

Desirable outcomes

- In the event of further archaeological investigation being necessary, seek to gain further data on probable infilled west-east watercourse, possibly a primary channel located on the edge of the floodplain (see UV 10 and UV 13)
- Enhance the setting of Coningsby's Hospital opposite

Archaeological action plan

- Conduct further detailed scoping to specify location and nature of field data collection
- Design and commission field evaluations on the Widemarsh Street frontage, in the interior of the Widemarsh Street plots and down to the common boundary to the rear of the plots.
- Implement archaeological mitigation plan on the basis of the above, based either on preservation of archaeological remains in situ or by record via further investigation

UV13

This development parcel, as outlined in the 2008 ESG Masterplan, is mostly contained within the Widemarsh Street historic monastic precincts zone (TCA 11) but extends northwards into the Widemarsh Street character area (TCA 8) and just into the Police Dog Training Ground (TCA 9). Thus delineated, this development parcel, and the east-west road bounding its north side, miss an opportunity to reinforce and perpetuate the subtleties of the geography at the junction of the Widemarsh Street plots, the historic precincts and the open meadow known from its recent use as the Police Dog Training Ground.

Current level of understanding and archaeological character: deposits

Medium. UV13 contains (is superimposed diagonally over) 118 Widemarsh Street, the only archaeologically evaluated site in the floodplain section of the medieval suburb. Further south and east, it contains the footprint of the whole of the Dominican Friary cloisters – as determined by trial-trenching in 1958 (SMR 43804) – and linearly bisects the site of the friary church, confirmed in the 1950s and amplified by subsequent evaluation (SMR 43794, 43795). The central and northern areas of UV13 contain the northern part of the friary precinct. Although the principal 1958 trench sampled this area sufficiently to demonstrate a steady increase in the depth of archaeological deposit, from about one metre around the south side of the cloisters to three metres as the natural ground drops into the floodplain, nothing was learnt of the character of the archaeology, or the structures and activities to be expected there. North-west of the cloisters, to the rear (east) of Coningsby's Hospital, there are a number of records of discoveries of burials, though whether associated with the hospital, or friary, or both, has not been determined. The extent of the cemetery/cemeteries is also unknown, though it would not be unreasonable to expect burials in any part of UV13. A geophysical survey (SMR 43796) of the gardens between the hospital and the Blackfriars ruins revealed considerable archaeological complexity, including buried structural remains and surfaces, though without an excavated control sample it is difficult to interpret these results. Evaluations carried out on the John Venn Centre, in the centre/north of the cloisters, were restricted in depth and yielded only limited information;

evaluations around the likely east end of the church were more informative, yielding structural evidence and finds of pottery, tile and painted glass.

In short, current archaeological understanding of the area of UV13 is fairly uniform, but quite crude and sketchy. The increase in depth of stratified deposit from south to north has been established but, outside of the cloisters, almost nothing is known of the layout of the friary, its boundaries, buildings or cemetery.

Archaeological character: existing buildings

As presently conceived, all existing buildings within the area of UV13 are of mid-20th-century or later date; none appear on the Buildings of Interest list (Building Conservation Team 2006). Any new build within UV13 will however, have a major impact on the setting of the Scheduled Ancient Monument (SAM 13610) that embraces both Coningsby's Hospital, the standing ruins of the Blackfriars and a substantial though undetermined part of the Blackfriars precinct. Both Coningsby's and the Blackfriars ruins and preaching cross are also Listed Buildings.

Archaeological character: historic landscape

As expressed above, UV13 as currently planned is a rectilinear block superimposed over the surviving subtle curves of the medieval suburban plots and the floodplain-edge site of the historic precincts. It is highly likely that this floodplain-edge setting was very deliberately chosen for the first hospital, a leper hospital, on the Coningsby's site in the 12th century. Such institutions were commonly located on the outermost boundaries of towns as symbolic and religious markers, and the hospital is likely to represent the northern limit of the city before the suburb was extended northwards into and across the Wide Marsh floodplain.

Archaeological risks

- Major monastic remains are likely to occur throughout UV13; and will include substantial masonry buildings and less substantial structures, but their location, extent, degree of survival and character are unknown
- Cemeteries are known within UV13 but their extent and density are unknown. Burials could be encountered almost anywhere within UV13 south of the present suburban plot, 118 Widemarsh Street
- Exploitation of water channels along the floodplain edge on the north side of the Blackfriars precinct is probable (e.g. for monastic drainage/water supply, possible post-Dissolution industrial uses), but so far unknown archaeologically

- The extent of waterlogged strata and survival of organic remains under the north side of the precincts are unknown
- Deep, waterlogged deposits and the survival of organic remains, including timber structures, have been established on 118 Widemarsh Street. Similar conditions may be found under the St John's Ambulance plot, but this has not been established

Historic environment enhancement opportunities

There is a major opportunity here to improve the immediate context of the ancient monuments, in terms of their visual setting (see below), public interpretation, accessibility and protection from vandalism by repopulating their setting. New buildings could be designed to frame the core of the former precinct, restoring a sense of enclosure to it and adding a degree of surveillance to the monument ruin and preaching cross.

Desirable outcomes

- A more complete understanding of and better protection for the major monuments that distinguish this area
- Improvement of the setting of the Blackfriars remains and Coningsby's Hospital, particularly in terms of present low-rise buildings encroaching on the claustral core from the east, and present 'hard' transition to the school premises to the south
- Better on-site interpretation of the Blackfriars ruins and former precinct

Archaeological action plan

- Conduct further detailed scoping to specify the location and nature of field data collection. More specifically a desk-based assessment of the historic precincts should be undertaken to collect and assess archaeological data from the site with particular regard to: establishing variations in the depth, character and preservation of archaeological deposits across the site; the extent and boundaries of the friary precinct; the likely extent of cemeteries; the presence of variations in activities across the site (e.g. industrial uses on the Canal Road side)
- On the basis of the above, design and commission field evaluations to more fully assess the character and scope of buried archaeological remains, to establish constraints and opportunities in advance of the design of new buildings for the site

UV14

This parcel corresponds almost precisely with the Canal Road commercial zone (TCA 12) occupying the west side of Canal Road.

Current level of understanding

Medium. There have been two archaeological field evaluations within UV14, one comprising a number of individual trenches.

Archaeological character: deposits

Evaluation trenches preceding the construction of the Day Centre located, on the western side of that property, the robbed remains of what was probably the eastern end of the church together with typical Dissolution-period monastic deposits, incorporating painted glass and decorated floor tiles (SMR 43795). Further east, towards Canal Road, the evaluation found archaeological deposits about one metre deep and late medieval industrial activity including a north-south timber-lined channel containing tanners' waste products; the channel was probably a leat taken off the Tan Brook about 50 metres to the north but the remainder of its course and extent are unknown. As planned, UV14 will incorporate the course of the Tan Brook at its northern end; the depositional character of this part of the area is unknown, though deposit depth is likely to increase significantly close to or beyond it. Whether the industrial activity was part of the Blackfriars precinct or lay outside it has not been established. Trenching right on the Canal Road frontage found medieval property boundaries and metalling that suggested that the road itself is of medieval date.

Archaeological character: existing buildings

All of the buildings in this area are of 20th-century origin. The tin chapel (the former Apostolic Church) of early 20th-century date appears on the buildings of interest list (Buildings Conservation Team 2006) as worthy of preservation, though not necessarily in situ.

Archaeological character: historic landscape

There are two historic landscape issues germane to this area. The first is the setting of the Blackfriars ancient monument. Excavated evidence suggests that the east end of the friary church stood about 70 metres west of Canal Road (just behind the present Day Centre), and it is likely that some at least of this development parcel overlaps with the original precinct. Further work (documentary research, in addition to excavation – see conclusions, below) may be able to locate the boundary, though wherever it was, the design of new buildings in this parcel will be crucial to the setting of the monument. The

second issue is Canal Road itself. Archaeological evidence shows that it is of medieval origin; preliminary documentary research (Baker 2007) suggests that it may be the medieval Frog Lane, a popular short-cut into town from the Monkmoor Mill (station area) direction that was closed by the friars to enlarge their precinct. In summary, although the present appearance of Canal Road is that of an approach to the trading estate, it appears to be another component of the medieval landscape framework that has determined the shaping of the ESG in its current form.

Archaeological risks

- Uncertain eastward extent of monastic deposits and structures
- Uncertain extent of known infilled medieval water channel; possible presence of others

Historic environment enhancement opportunities

- Enhancement of setting of Blackfriars ancient monument by new build in this area
- Improvement of access patterns to/through ancient monument via this area
- Landscape enhancement by improvement of this section of the Widemarsh/Tan Brook

Desirable outcomes

- Enhancement of the setting and surroundings of the Blackfriars
- Enhancement of the role of Canal Road as a north-south route into station area

Archaeological action plan

- Conduct further detailed scoping to specify the location and nature of field data collection. More specifically a desk-based assessment of the historic precincts should be undertaken. In addition to collecting archaeological deposit data from the site, it may be possible (with particular reference to UV14) to establish the original extent of the precinct from post-Dissolution documentation.
- On the basis of the above, design and commission field evaluations to more fully assess the character and scope of buried archaeological

- On the basis of the evaluations, design an archaeological mitigation strategy to ensure preservation of buried archaeological remains, either in situ (by design) or by record (by further investigation)

UV15

This parcel lies just within the south-eastern corner of the Barrs Court Trading Estate character area (TCA 3), currently part of the Postal Sorting Office yard immediately adjoining Morrison's supermarket.

Current level of understanding and archaeological character: deposits

Medium to good. Investigations of and around the remains of Monkmoor Mill (SMR 43801, 43802) under the north corner of the present supermarket found depths of around 2.5m of made ground, mostly recent (19th-century and later) material associated with the intensive industrialisation of the area around the mill, and the canal basin, in the late 19th century. UV15 corresponds quite precisely with the footprint of a 19th-century saw mill lying on the north side of the Widemarsh Brook, which in this area lay close to and parallel to the Tan Brook, which drove the mill. The site of the former mill pond lies in the gap between UV 15 and UV16.

Archaeological character: existing buildings

There is one existing building of 20th-century date that does not appear on the Building Conservation Team's Buildings of Interest list (2006)

Archaeological character: historic landscape

The dominant landscape features in/bordering UV15 are the Tan Brook (open) and the Widemarsh Brook (culverted) flowing alongside it.

Archaeological risks

- Unpredictable channels or leats associated with the medieval Monkmoor Mill (to the south-east, under Morrison's). Such features may be deep and contain waterlogged sediments with good organic preservation
- A metalled surface of unknown date and unknown function (SMR 30326) was excavated in the 1980s at a depth of 2.5m to the north of the supermarket. Its interpretation and its course were unclear

Historic environment enhancement opportunities

Improvement/opening up of the watercourses to provide a natural boundary and 'green corridor'

Desirable outcomes

- Determination, if possible, of the identity, character and extent of the buried metalled surface found to the north of the supermarket in the 1980s
- Although a small area, the position of this block south-west of the station on a potential route (via Canal Road) into the interior of the ESG makes it design critical in terms of waymarking and announcing the identity of the regenerated area

Archaeological action plan

- Conduct further detailed scoping to specify the location and nature of field data collection
- On the basis of the above design and commission a field evaluation to characterise floodplain deposits, check for watercourses and test for the presence of early features at the base of the made ground to be expected in this area

UV16

This parcel occupies part of the Canal Road commercial zone character area (TCA 12) on the east side of the street.

Current level of understanding

Medium: based on archaeological field evaluations on the west side of Canal Road.

Archaeological character: deposits

From the above, it is probable that archaeological deposits lie to a depth of c. one metre in UV16, and that they will be largely industrial in character, principally associated with late medieval tanning and/or other water-related crafts. The possibility of an infilled watercourse taken off the Tan Brook cannot be discounted. Canal Road itself has been shown to be of medieval date from excavation on its western frontage.

Archaeological character: existing buildings

UV16 currently has a single 20th-century commercial building standing on it; it is not on the buildings of interest list (Buildings Conservation Team 2006).

Archaeological character: historic landscape

Canal Road is part of the medieval framework of roads within the ESG.

Archaeological risks

- Unpredictable channels associated with medieval industrial activity, potentially containing waterlogged fills with good organic preservation
- Unpredictable prehistoric activity on the flood plain margin and along the watercourse

Historic environment enhancement opportunities

- Reinforcement of the medieval road line

Desirable outcomes

- Mitigation of the impact of any new build by preservation of remains in situ, or by record via further archaeological investigation
- In the event of the need for further archaeological investigation, there would be an opportunity to learn more about medieval industry developing on the periphery of the Blackfriars precinct outside the Bye Street (Commercial Road) suburb

Archaeological action plan

- Conduct further detailed scoping to specify the location and nature of field data collection
- On the basis of the above, design and commission a field evaluation to characterise archaeological deposits and check for artificial water channels connecting to the Tan Brook
- From the results of field evaluation, design and implement an archaeological mitigation strategy

UV17 & UV18

These parcels have been dealt with together as they lie close to each other and have a number of characteristics in common. UV17 lies on the east side of Monkmoor Street in a rearward extension of the Commercial Road suburb character area (TCA 23). UV18 is contained within the Commercial Road suburb character area (TCA 23) at the immediate rear of the Commercial Road plots.

Current level of understanding

Poor. There have been no archaeological evaluations in or close to UV 17 or UV18, other than a number of investigations on the west side of Canal Road (see above) and the north side of Catherine Street (Coningsby Court: SMR 20112, 32840).

Archaeological character: deposits

It is unclear whether construction in these parcels would encounter ground conditions similar to those on the west side of Canal Road, where relatively shallow but intact medieval industrial deposits were found (SMR 43795, 20073), or conditions similar to those on the north side of Catherine Street, where no medieval strata had survived building work in the 19th century. Both UV17 and 18 lie within the former backlands of Commercial Road plots so, if deposits have survived later building activity, evidence of medieval back-plot activities, from the late 12th century on, may survive too. The NW end of UV18 and, to a lesser extent, the centre of UV 18 impinge on a slight but noticeable ridge, lying north-south, elevated by up to a metre above its surroundings. Whether this will be found to have had an influence on the depositional characteristics of the area is unknown.

Archaeological character: existing buildings

UV17 contains one building of 19th-century date and other of the 20th century. The 19th-century chapel is included on the Buildings of Interest List (Building Conservation Team 2006). UV18 similarly contains a single 19th-century structure (which appears on the Buildings of Interest List) while the remainder are of 20th-century date (and do not).

Archaeological character: historic landscape

While UV17 is technically a developed back-plot area associated with the Commercial Road plots, development in the 19th century ensured that Monkmoor Street assumed its own distinctive character of which the Nell Gwynne pub and the chapel within UV17 are distinctive and important facets. UV18 retains its back-plot character, while adding townscape interest to the

present cut-through between Canal Road and the supermarket site and main-street frontage.

Archaeological risks

- Uncertain character and depths of archaeological deposits in both parcels. Possible survival of medieval back-plot features in each parcel

Historic environment enhancement opportunities

- There is an opportunity to make more legible the complex (because infilled) geography of the rear of the Bye Street (Commercial Road) suburb plot series.

Desirable outcomes

- Preservation of overall Victorian character of the Monkmoor Street area
- Preservation of historic building patterns at the rear of the Commercial Street plots (UV18)
- Careful design of new builds to preserve and enhance the character and tranquillity of the green open space (former cemetery) between these two areas

Archaeological action plan

- Conduct further detailed scoping to specify the location and nature of field data collection
- Commission further field evaluations on the basis of the above
- On the basis of field evaluations, devise an archaeological mitigation strategy for preservation of archaeological remains either in situ (via design of new build) or by record (via further investigation)

3. Individual development parcels: The Football Ground, Retail Quarter, Catherine Street, Station Approach

Hereford United Football Club

The football ground was, in the archaeological characterisation, assigned its own townscape area (TCA 10).

Current level of understanding

Poor to medium. There have been no archaeological investigations within or adjacent to the football ground itself other than the northernmost trenches excavated during the 2006 and 2007 Cattle Market evaluation campaigns, next to the Blackfriars Street entrance (SMR 44131, 44732, trenches 8, 13 and 14) and on the north side of the street by the main entrance to the Merton Meadow car park (44732 trench 19). There have been no evaluations bearing upon the northern, floodplain-edge, end of the site.

Archaeological character: deposits

The Cattle Market evaluation trenches to the south and east disclosed, under the modern surfaces, only one or two layers of subsoil over natural gravel at depths varying from 0.8m to 1.2m below ground level. The most significant result by far was the discovery, immediately to the west of the Cattle Market entrance, of a pit containing burnt stones and early Bronze Age pottery (SMR 44131 trench 8). As discussed above (see Introduction) this find is unlikely to have been completely isolated, and there is a high probability of further activity of this date somewhere in the vicinity. The depositional characteristics of the northern end of the site may well be somewhat different as this area covers the gentle slope down to the edge of the Widemarsh Brook floodplain, represented by the main area of the Merton Meadow car park. This slope is apparent along the eastern side of the football ground commencing from a point roughly opposite the north side of the Wickes DIY building. Anecdotal evidence also suggests that a very slight terrace or drop in level down to the north is apparent in the surface of the football pitch itself. The singular alignment of the north boundary to the football ground has also been discussed, together with the possibility that it represents a boundary derived from a floodplain edge water channel. As discussed in the introduction, the floodplain edge, broadly defined, should in general be considered to be a zone of added archaeological sensitivity, not only for prehistoric activity but also, possibly, for the unlocated 13th-century, temporary site of the Dominican Friary which, like its 14th-century successor, would have to have been beyond reach of most flooding events but within easy reach of running water.

Archaeological character: existing buildings

All of the buildings in this area are of 20th-century or later date; none appear on the Buildings of Interest list (Building Conservation Team 2006).

Archaeological character: historic landscape

The northern boundary of the football ground has been extensively discussed as a feature of some historical significance on the floodplain edge; it also provides a link with the built-up area outside the ESG to the west, where its alignment (together with the watercourse that is thought to have given rise to it) continues through the housing in the Moor Street – Prior Street block.

Archaeological risks

- Unpredictable but potentially highly significant prehistoric activity (possibly late Neolithic/early Bronze Age) in the general vicinity of the pit found within the Cattle Market entrance on Blackfriars Street
- Increased likelihood of prehistoric activity in zone bounding the floodplain
- Remote possibility of unpredictable medieval activity (Blackfriars temporary 13th-century site) in zone bounding floodplain

Historic environment enhancement opportunities

- New building here will have the opportunity to enhance the setting of the Courtyard Theatre opposite, arguably by means of innovative modern design and possibly by means of a new open space

Desirable outcomes

- Mitigation of the impact of any new build either by preservation of archaeological remains in situ, or by record via further investigation
- There is an opportunity to test this area for unpredictable settlement evidence on the floodplain edge

Archaeological action plan

- Conduct further detailed scoping to specify the location and nature of field data collection
- On the basis of the above design and commission a field evaluation to characterise archaeological deposits on the main gravel terrace, on the

- Design an archaeological mitigation strategy on the basis of the above

The Retail Quarter

This development block occupies the whole area of the mid-19th-century cattle market (TCA 18), together with land on the Blackfriars Street frontage containing semi-detached houses (TCA 19), the multi-storey car-park and its environs (TCA 20) and the traditionally built-up frontage of Widemarsh Street (TCA 21, part of).



Near vertical air photograph (2007) of the Cattle Market and inner relief road

Current level of understanding

Medium to good, and poor. Two basic zones of different depositional character underlie this area. The first is the former Cattle Market, which remained open land until the 1850s and has been a cattle market ever since. This has been the subject of two evaluation campaigns amounting to 19 individual trenches and is relatively *well understood*. The second basic zone is that occupied by plots belonging to the Widemarsh Street suburb. This zone has never been evaluated and understanding is consequently *poor*, though it may be expected to show occupation back to the 12th century.

Archaeological character: deposits

The 2006 and 2007 (SMR 44131, 44732) evaluation campaigns on the Cattle Market found ground conditions that were consistent with the known history of the site: surfaces and services associated with the market overlying one or more distinct subsoil layers containing little artefactual material, overlying natural gravel at depths below ground level varying from 0.8m to 1.8m without any obviously coherent pattern to the variation. In places pockets of deep modern disturbance and rubbish dumping were encountered, close to the eastern boundary and also to Edgar Street (centre, west side).

The outstanding feature of the evaluations was, however, the discovery of a (so far) isolated pit, close to the Blackfriars Street frontage, containing burnt stones and early Bronze Age pottery. As previously discussed, this pit is likely to have been dug in the general vicinity of some contemporary settlement but no such settlement has yet been located. Elsewhere in the environs of the city such pits have been found (for example) in association with a circular timber building with a porch, with linear monuments, and with dispersed tree-throw pits (caused by blown-over trees).

There is also a slight possibility of early medieval (late Saxon) settlement evidence occurring in the extreme SW corner of the Cattle Market close to Edgar Street. This arises from excavations within the city wall on the Tesco site, on the opposite side of New Market Street, where settlement features were found that appeared to relate to the rear of a series of plots developed along the east side of Portfield Street, Edgar Street's predecessor. Of the two evaluation trenches situated in the nearest part of the Cattle Market, one was located close to the New Market Street subway on ground that was found to have been heavily disturbed by modern services (SMR 44131 trench 1). The other, located around the corner about 16m north of the roundabout (SMR 44131 trench 2), encountered a 0.8m depth of modern surfaces and levelling materials, over topsoil and subsoil down to natural gravel at 1.6m below ground level. This sample is however insufficient to discount all possibility that further settlement evidence may yet be found in this area.

A further issue arises from the discovery in the 1980s, within the city wall on New Market Street, of a pre-12th-century gravel surface, thought on the basis of exposure in one small trench (SMR 44356 trench 2), to represent part of a Roman road heading north. If this identification was correct (and it must be emphasised there was no corroborative evidence, nor has there been any sign of the alleged road further south) the road would pass into the Cattle Market about 40 metres west of the New Market Inn. It was not (because of the still-functioning market) possible to evaluate its postulated line in 2006 or 2007.

The eastern half of the Retail Quarter covers the area that was, historically, part of the Widemarsh Street medieval suburb, the burgages in this area formerly extending about 90 metres back from the street frontage. The Cattle Market evaluation trenches are of little help in assessing likely ground conditions in this area, though investigations across the road (SMR 43806,

43807) see the Catherine Street Area, below) tentatively indicate a likely depth of deposit somewhere around 1.4m, with evidence of medieval pitting, rubbish disposal and at least fragmentary structural evidence on and close to the frontage.

Archaeological character: existing buildings

All of the structures within the Cattle Market are of 20th-century date and none appear on the Buildings of Interest list (Building Conservation Team 2006). The exception, on the fringe of this area, is the New Market Inn, a statutorily Listed building of mid-19th-century date intimately associated with the market and thus with the Hereford improvements of the 1850s (Baker 2007). All of the buildings on the Widemarsh Street frontage north of the multi-storey car-park appear as Buildings of Interest, including the semi-detached houses around the corner on Blackfriars Street. Of particular note are the Victorian Gothic no.83, and the double-pile building on the Blackfriars Street corner, of probable 18th-century date.

Archaeological character: historic landscape

The sharp division between suburban plots and open fields that originated in the 12th century was retained even after the construction of the Cattle Market in the 1850s. This sharp division has been greatly eroded since, mainly by the clearance of the traditional plot pattern around Garrick House, the multi-storey car park and the electricity substation.

Archaeological risks

- Unpredictable prehistoric occupation within the Cattle Market
- Unpredictable (slight) possibility of early medieval occupation at the SW end of the Cattle Market
- Unquantified extent of archaeological survival within the area of the Widemarsh Street suburban plots
- Possibility (very slight) of Roman road heading north through the area

Historic environment enhancement opportunities

- Restoration of the distinction between the close-grained suburban Widemarsh Street and its plots, and the former open Portfields area (the Cattle Market) at the rear by (for example) restoration of the former boundary (the suburban back fence line) with differing new build densities and/or heights either side

Desirable outcomes

- Mitigation of new build impacts on the buried archaeology by preservation in situ or by 'preservation by record' via excavation
- Investigation of possible prehistoric activity in the Cattle Market area
- Testing of the alleged north-south 'Roman road'

Archaeological action plan

- Further detailed scoping study needed
- Design and commission further field evaluation trenches on the basis of the above, with emphasis on southern Cattle Market margin and the eastern (Widemarsh Street suburb) section
- Devise and implement an archaeological mitigation strategy on the basis of the above

The Catherine Street Area

The Catherine Street area covers a number of townscape character areas: principally the Coningsby Street/Catherine Street character area (TCA 22), with, at either end, part the Widemarsh Street suburb (south) (TCA 21), part of the Commercial Road suburb (TCA 23) and a small part of the Canal Road Victorian sector (TCA 17).

Current level of understanding

Medium to good. There have been two archaeological investigations of back-plot areas behind the Widemarsh Street frontage at the western end of this area; one on the Blue School Street frontage, and two on the north side of Catherine Street, at Catherine Court towards its eastern end. Deposit survival has not been tested behind in the back-plot areas behind the Commercial Road frontage, though excavations across the road on the Magistrates' Court suggest that occupation may be anticipated there from the late 12th century on.

Archaeological character: deposits

Archaeological deposit formation and survival conditions across the Catherine Street Area may be broken down into three distinct zones (as done for the 2007 *Archaeological Characterisation*): the medieval suburban plots of Widemarsh Street at the western end, the medieval plots of Commercial Road

at the eastern end, and the main bulk of Catherine Street and Blue School Street in the middle, developed at a much later date – commencing gradually in the 18th century and intensifying greatly in the 19th.

Excavations behind the Widemarsh Street frontage at two points, nos.64-66 (SMR 43806) and 88-90 (SMR 43807) found, respectively, medieval rubbish pits sealed by a late medieval yard surface at the rear of a 17th-century building, and another 17th-century building, with fragments of its predecessor, behind which a large quarry pit had been backfilled c.1400 with tanners' waste and discarded roofing materials. These conditions, associated with a total deposit depth of around 1.4m, are likely to pertain only to the area now or formerly covering the rear of the Widemarsh Street plots.

Further east, along Blue School Street, a trench on the frontage west of Blue School House (SMR 34318) found only demolition rubble to the full 1.3m depth of the trench (though it may have been located entirely within a backfilled cellar) while a second trench to the rear/north found sandstone rubble, possibly derived from the nearby city wall. The course of the city defences, including the former extramural ditch, is fairly accurately known in this area. The outer edge of the infilled city ditch probably lies about 8m south of the frontage of Blue School House but closes to just within 5m of the Franklin Barnes building.

Investigations on Catherine Street have been confined to the Catherine Court site (SMR 30347, 43789), the former Davis Brooke soft-drink manufactory, where 1.2m of deposit was encountered, mainly in the form of dark soils of 19th-century date, cut by 19th-century footings. These findings may well be replicated across the Catherine Street area (between the medieval suburbs at either end) where 19th-century housing has been demolished and replaced by 20th-century commercial structures.

At the eastern end of the area, the ground occupied by 57-58 Blue School Street, the Franklin Barnes building, and from 5 to 18 Commercial Road, all falls within the bounds of the Bye Street medieval suburb which, from the results of the nearby Magistrates' Court excavations, was built up or at least occupied from the late 12th century on. Ground conditions on the north side of Commercial Road (formerly Bye Street) have not been tested.

Archaeological character: existing buildings

This area contains a large number of pre-20th-century buildings, most of which appear on the Buildings of Interest List (Building Conservation Team 2006). These include: on Coningsby Street, nos.9-15 and no.24 ('Climb on Bikes'), a warehouse of 1903; The Nell Gwynne pub and its outbuildings; 3-6 Monkmoor Street and 40-42 Catherine Street, all of which contribute to the strongly-marked Victorian character of the eastern end of the Catherine Street Area. All of the buildings on the Commercial Road frontage appear on the Buildings of Interest list, including the Franklin Barnes building ('probably the best example of post war construction in the city if not the county' according to the

Buildings of Interest list) and no.8-9 Commercial Road is statutorily Listed (grade 2), incorporating a 17th-century timber-framed building. Because they impart to the area a 'strong city centre character', all of the buildings (19th- and 20th-century) on the Widemarsh Street frontage, with the exception of nos.72-80, are included in the Buildings of Interest list.

Archaeological character: historic landscape

The street pattern in this area is a product of the medieval period: Blue School Street following the outer edge of the city ditch and offering a short-cut between arterial roads; Canal Road offering a route from Commercial Road towards Monkmoor Mill; and Catherine Street and Coningsby Street offering short cuts between Canal Road and Widemarsh Street. Possibly Coningsby Street was formed as a route around the outside of the Blackfriars precinct; it could however have been much earlier, its curve perhaps reflecting a medieval agricultural boundary. Whatever their precise origin, the streets in this area have provided a framework for settlement for at least 400 years (they were first recorded on Speed's map of 1610), and quite possibly twice that.

Archaeological risks

- Unknown ground conditions in areas that form or formed part of the Commercial Road plots: good survival of evidence for (for example) medieval industrial activity could survive
- The evaluations in this area so far have sampled only extremely limited areas of ground that have been undisturbed by medieval and later activities; the possibility of unpredictable earlier remains cannot therefore be ruled out on present evidence

Historic environment enhancement opportunities

- Retention and improvement of the 19th-century buildings towards the eastern end of the area to reinforce the existing Victorian character
- Removal of poor-quality 20th-century commercial structures from the rear of Widemarsh Street and either side of the central portion of Catherine Street

Desirable outcomes

- There is an opportunity to create a new civic open space to articulate with and improve the setting of the surviving section of city wall at the rear of the Maylord Orchard building. This would enhance the visibility

- Enhanced linkage north and south across the area, other than simply by a new road, to better link the eastern side of the Blackfriars precinct to the city centre

Archaeological action plan

- Design and commission archaeological evaluation of the ground at the rear of the existing Commercial Road plots
- On the basis of the evaluation results, design and implement a scheme for archaeological mitigation based either on preservation of archaeological remains in situ or on recovery by further investigation and 'preservation by record'

Station Quarter 1

This area straddles part of the Barrs Court Trading Estate character area (TCA 3) together with the Station Approach character area (TCA14).

Current level of understanding and archaeological character: deposits

Poor. The nearest archaeological investigations to this development parcel are those that took place on the Postal Sorting Office (SMR 30004; see parcel UV9) and on the Safeway/Monkmoor Mill site (SMR 43801, 43802), now Morrison's supermarket. The former were restricted in scope but identified average depths of 2.5 metres of modern (mostly 19th- and 20th-century) landfill and rubble over floodplain deposits consisting of peat, or peaty silt-clay with a high organic content, the top of such deposits being recorded at around 49 metres AOD. The Monkmoor Mill investigations included a trench to take a diversion of the Widemarsh Brook around the footprint of the proposed supermarket, and this encountered a metalled surface of unknown date at a depth of 2.5m below mostly modern demolition deposits. For the development parcel under discussion, a similar sequence of floodplain alluvial deposits under a substantial depth of 19th-century and later made ground can be predicted. The area of SQ1 only began to be built up in the 19th century and by the mid-1850s was partly occupied by a saw mill and carriage sheds.

Archaeological character: existing buildings

The only structures within this development parcel (not including the Listed mid-19th-century Barrs Court Station building) are of 20th-century date and are not included in the Buildings of Interest list (Conservation Section 2006).

Archaeological character: historic landscape

The present landscape is almost wholly late 20th-century in character, though elements of it have evolved since the opening of the railway station in 1855. The Widemarsh Brook runs to the south, under the supermarket car park.

Archaeological risks

- Unpredictable prehistoric activity in the floodplain, possibly including the unidentified metal surface found at depth just north of the supermarket

Historic environment enhancement opportunities

- Enhancement of the setting of Barrs Court Station through the removal of clutter and re-design of the 'apron', particularly in terms of linkages into the surrounding townscape:
- Creation of legible pedestrian links through to the Catherine Street area and the Blackfriars area

Desirable outcomes

- Enhancement of the setting of Barrs Court Station, as above. The creation of a station plaza or similar setting appropriate to a major city gateway site
- Further investigation of floodplain phenomena

Archaeological action plan

- Design and commission field evaluations to more fully assess the character and scope of buried archaeological deposits
- On the basis of the field evaluations, devise and implement a mitigation strategy based either on preservation of archaeological remains in situ or on preservation by record (following further investigation)

Conclusions and recommendations for further work

This report, building on earlier surveys of the known archaeology, topography and history of the ESG, emphasises that, despite lying outside the perimeter of the Saxon and medieval city, the study area is nevertheless comparatively rich in significant archaeological remains and retains many historic landscape features dating back to the Middle Ages, and possibly earlier. In very brief summary, the most significant, or potentially the most significant, elements of the archaeology of ESG have been identified as follows:

- The Blackfriars and Coningsby's Hospital medieval precincts
- The Widemarsh Street medieval suburb with its well-preserved plots and deep, waterlogged deposits
- Prehistoric activity in the Cattle Market area
- Potential prehistoric activity in the Widemarsh floodplain
- The Commercial Road medieval suburb
- The medieval city defences bounding the ESG to the south
- The industrial archaeology of the canal terminus, railway station and Monkmoor Mill

Further studies

One of the principal conclusions of this study is, however, that the information base is seriously under-developed, with no major excavations having taken place within the ESG and relatively few field evaluations: understanding of, for example, the whole of the Widemarsh Street medieval being dependent on small-scale trenching and test-pit observations within just three properties. There is a clear need for further field evaluation in all areas to be affected by the regeneration process but, as a prelude to that, there is also significant scope for further analysis of existing archaeological, geotechnical and historical record sources. The Blackfriars precinct, for example, has been sampled on a number of occasions in the past (there are records of more than ten individual trenches/test-pits scattered across the likely area of the precinct), but the results of these individual investigations have never been collated.

The need for further studies can, on the basis of this masterplan, therefore be identified. The complexity of the data to be analysed varies greatly from case to case:

1. The Urban Village

The principal objectives of a further, more detailed, assessment of the Urban Village regeneration areas can be identified as:

- Closer definition, using archaeological, historical and geotechnical records, of the precise extent and depositional character of the **Widemarsh floodplain**, with a particular emphasis on the occurrence of peat deposits and past and present stream channels
- Further understanding of the industrial archaeology of the **canal basin** of the 1840s and its surroundings
- Analysis of further geotechnical information, as and when it becomes available, for all areas of the urban village
- Assessment of the likely impact of new development in the light of the above
- Based on the results of the impact assessment, a plan for further archaeological evaluation

2. The Retail Quarter

A shorter document will be required, principally to plan for further evaluation of this area to investigate the problems that remain outstanding: the context of the prehistoric pit at the north end of this area, and the possibility of a Roman road entering the site from the south.

- Analysis of further geotechnical data as and when it becomes available
- Assessment of the probable developmental ground impact of new buildings in different parts of the quarter
- Establishment of a prioritised scheme for further archaeological field evaluation to assist in the management of the archaeological risks

3. The Catherine Street Area

Again, a shorter document will be required to plan further evaluation in this area against the assessed impact of new development, concentrating principally on the west and east ends of the area which impact on areas built up since the 12th century.

- Analysis of further geotechnical information as it becomes available

- Assessment of the probable developmental ground impact of new buildings in different parts of the quarter
- Establishment of a prioritised scheme for further archaeological field evaluation to assist in the management of the archaeological risks

4. The Station Approach Area (SQ1)

As above, a very short document is required to plan archaeological evaluation in this area, none having previously taken place.

- Analysis of geotechnical data as and when it becomes available, particularly in the light of previous work done immediately to the east on floodplain peat and other deposits underlying the General Hospital site
- Assessment of the probable developmental ground impact of new buildings in different parts of the quarter
- Establishment of a prioritised scheme for further archaeological field evaluation to assist in the management of the archaeological risks

More detailed appraisal studies will also be required for the two most significant and complicated monument-complexes in the ESG area:

5. The Blackfriars/Coningsby's Hospital historic precincts

This should include:

- A review, summary and assessment of the archaeological investigations (mostly field evaluations) of the precincts and their immediate vicinity
- Generated from the above, a detailed *site deposit model*, to predict depths and types of deposit, depth of burial and the sensitivity of significant archaeology across the site
- Further understanding of the physical setting of these monuments. This is extremely poorly understood and the extent of the Blackfriars' precinct remains largely unknown. Human remains have been found at a number of locations around these monuments but their context is unknown
- An identification of design options for the ruined remains of the Blackfriars claustral range and the former precinct

6. The City Walls

Standing remains of the medieval wall survive along about half of the 500-metre perimeter where the ESG adjoins the city, though the true character of these masonry remains has never been established. The vital importance of successful linkages between the ESG regeneration area and the medieval walled city is widely recognised, but raises a number of townscape design issues. The principal objectives of a study of the city defences along the ESG perimeter would be:

- Characterisation, analysis and digital mapping of the standing city wall fabric bounding ESG. Fragmentary remains of the city wall survive along Blue School Street and New Market Street with a substantial section of replica wall around the Tesco site. There is a need to characterise, analyse and map these with the aim of identifying and distinguishing 'original' fabric (medieval), 'historic' fabric (sections rebuilt or adapted c.1500-1800), and modern replica city wall sections built in 1968-9.
- Characterisation of buried elements of the city defences: Synthesis of the results of the large number of small-scale investigations in this sector of the defences will allow a rapid assessment of the state of the buried archaeology and depths of burial of remains
- Identification of design options for the city defences. Hereford and the ESG are not alone in facing the complex issues inherent in the conservation of medieval defences and their successful incorporation into new townscape. A review of best practice in other towns with comparable remains will assist the identification of the range of options available for the conservation of the city defences bounding ESG, the re-design of their setting and the implications of the introduction or re-creation of access routes through them.

Bibliography

Baker, N J, 2007, 'An archaeological characterisation of the Edgar Street Grid, Hereford'. *Herefordshire Archaeology report* 230. Herefordshire Council

Cotton, J, 2003, 'Edgar Street Grid, Hereford: an archaeological issues paper'. *Herefordshire Archaeology report* 90. Herefordshire Council

Roberts, G, 2001, *The shaping of modern Hereford*. Logaston Press

A note on the mapping for this report

The cartography that supports this Archaeology Masterplan appears in the pages that follow. It takes the form of updated Urban Archaeological Database mapping of known archaeological monuments (sites) and 'events' (archaeological recognition events – excavations, evaluation trenches, observations, watching-briefs) against the regeneration parcels as expressed in the ESG 2008 Masterplan and discussed in the text above.

For historical mapping, and detailed mapping (insofar as it has been done) for, for example, the Blackfriars precinct and Scheduled Monument, the Widemarsh Street suburb and Monkmoor Mill, the reader is referred to the 2007 Archaeological Characterisation. Further reconstructive topographical mapping and predictive mapping of buried deposits will take place as part of the further stages of work identified in the conclusions and recommendations.