

Reference: The position of an archaeological excavation in advance of the proposed development at the South -East Quadrant, Town Centre, Redditch.

Background: It has been agreed by all concerned parties that an archaeological excavation extending over some 400 square metres should be undertaken in the area designated as Zone A in the Mitigation Strategy prepared by John Samuels Archaeological Consultants. In this same document it is suggested that map and documentary research may assist in planning the position of the trench in order to maximise the archaeological results of the excavation.

This research has been undertaken at the Local History section of Redditch Public Library and in consultation with Mr Davies, the archivist.

Results: No additional documentation beyond those references given in an Evaluation of the South-East Quadrant, Redditch, J.D.Hurst and E.A.Pearson, was forthcoming. Examination of the relevant O.S. map series providing the best information for the placement of buildings in the 19th and 20th centuries.

By 1880 the NE portion of the site was covered in Victorian tenements facing onto Grove St. whilst the rest of the site was covered in an irregular patchwork of buildings and property boundaries which may or may not relate to industrial activity, they certainly are not recent domestic developments. By the 1950's the New Palace Theatre occupies the SE section of the site, the tenements are still in position in the NE section whilst the rest of the site is covered by the Needle factory with the largest building component being situated in the NW section. It is probable that the factory buildings incorporated at least some of the buildings visible on the 19th century maps. The rest of the buildings in the area leave little courtyard space except for a small area facing onto the main entrance to the complex which faced W onto Queen St.

Proposal: There are various areas of interest within the archaeological development of the site which can be addressed by the positioning of the main trench in the NW section of the site. This trench will be rectangular with its long axis of 20m running NE to SW, its shorter axis will be 16m. The trench will re-expose the N end of the evaluation trench and associated archaeology. This trench is designed to pick up the latest elements of the Needle factory, some components of those features occurring on the 19th century map base and the large medieval ditch and part of the area which it enclosed to the N of the ditch. This trench will cover 320 square metres. It is further proposed that the evaluation trench is extended towards the SW boundary of the site, facing onto Alcester St. in order to investigate the potential for early occupation on the street frontage. This trench will occupy 60 square metres. A portion of the specified 400 square metres will be retained consisting of c20 square metres. This will be used to extend the site in the event of significant archaeology being discovered extending beyond the original boundaries of the excavation. Such an extension will only be undertaken after consultation with all concerned bodies.

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