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Bastion Mews, Hereford:
archaeological monitoring of bore hole surveying

Huw Sherlock
1998

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archenfield archaeology ltd

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*Bastion Mews, Hereford: archaeological monitoring of bore-hole survey
1998*

Client: Mr Z Dutton -Thompson, the site owner

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Cover Photograph: Aerial view of Hereford Cathedral, looking south

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Summary

Mr Z. Dutton-Thompson (the client), wished to identify the extent of any possible soil contamination that may have arisen from the presence of buried fuel tanks on the site (within 'Area 1' in fig.1). To achieve this a borehole survey was necessary, but given the proximity of the site to a Scheduled Ancient Monument (S.A.M. Hereford 124), and that it lies within the Area of Archaeological Importance (as defined by the Area of Archaeological Importance (Hereford) Order 1984), Mr. Dutton-Thompson commissioned an archaeological watching brief in order to assess the likely survival of substantially undisturbed archaeological remains in the area of potential disturbance (marked as Area 1 and Boreholes 1,2 and 3 in fig.1). The Boreholes were sunk with a percussion cap rig after removal of the concrete yard surface. The cores retrieved from the boreholes were analysed, drawn and sampled. They showed that substantially undisturbed and potentially important archaeological remains survive below the modern yard surface to a maximum depth of 3m in places.

1. Site location and description

N.G.R SO 5125 4010
HER event no. 30054

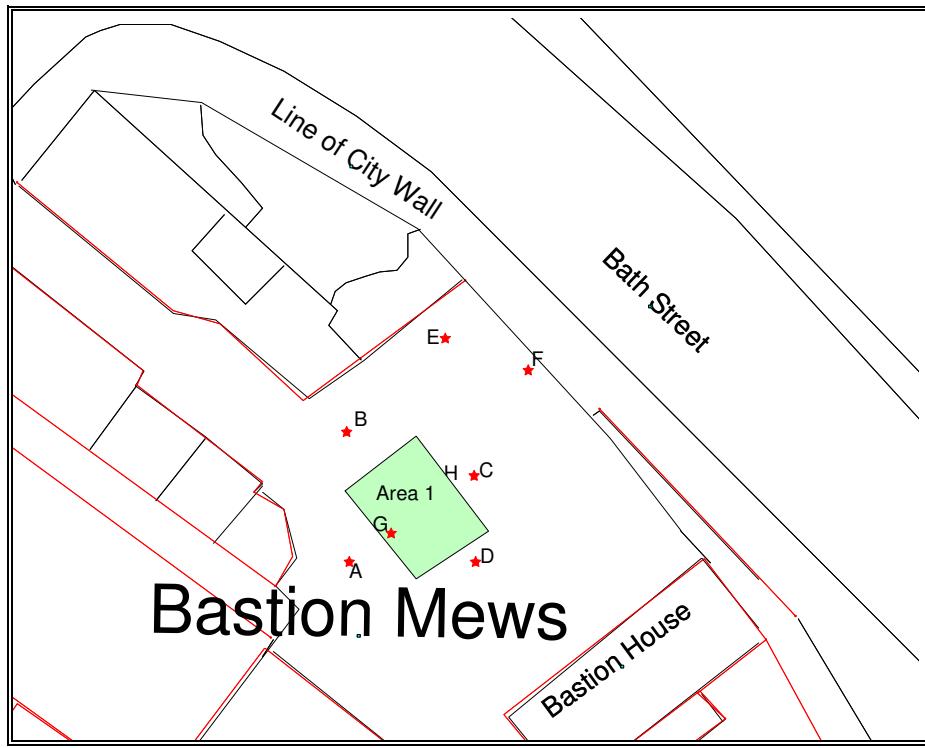


Figure 1: Plan of the site today showing the area in which the fuel tanks and hydraulic lift are located, and the location of the boreholes (A-H). See appendix for extract at 1:500 scale.

The site lies between Union Street and Bath Street, Hereford, and is bounded on its northern side by the line of the Old City Wall. The potential area of disturbance covers an area approximately 10m x 10m square. The area in which the fuel tanks lie (Area 1 in fig.1) was part of a paint spray shop and garage until destroyed by fire in the 1970's. A hydraulic lift was also installed in the immediate vicinity of the tanks.

2. Planning background

The site lies close to a Scheduled Ancient Monument (S.A.M. Hereford 124) and is within the Area of Archaeological Importance (as defined by the Area of Archaeological Importance (Hereford) Order 1984). This stipulates that notice is required of ".... any operations in the area which will disturb the ground".

The current proposals involve the conduct of a borehole survey to determine the extent and nature of any soil contamination resulting from leakage of fuel oils held within two underground fuel tanks on the site (within Area 1 on fig.1).

3. Geological, archaeological and historical background

Geology and land use

The solid geology of the Hereford region is made up of beds of the Lower Old Red Sandstone (source British Geological Survey Ten Mile Map Third Ed. [Solid]). The overlying or drift geology is an extensive terrace of riverine gravels left by the Wye glacier during the final glaciation. Within the immediate area of Hereford City a shallow, south-facing gravel terrace slopes down to the river. Brandon (1989, p.39) refers to this deposit as being fluviological in origin, relatively immature and between 7.5m and 10m deep. The site itself is well drained, and not generally subject to flooding.

The land is currently in use as an open courtyard with hard standing for vehicles. It is openly accessible to the public, being the main access route to the shops and businesses within Bastion Mews.

Archaeological and historical background

Little is known of any prehistoric settlement of the Hereford area, but the presence of Palaeolithic, Mesolithic or Neolithic artefacts or ecofacts buried beneath the gravel terrace cannot be discounted. Roman occupation of Hereford was focused on the site known as Kenchester (Roman name Magnis) which lies outside the city some five miles to the northwest. A corn drying oven constructed from a reused altar stone was discovered during excavations at Victoria Street, but few other finds of Roman material have come to light during excavations in the City.

During the Saxon period the site lay well to the North of the defensive Wall and Ditch, but some evidence of late Saxon occupation levels was found to be present during excavations at Maylord Orchards.

The best established historical use of the site begins with the Norman Conquest. Hereford was a focus of the immediate post-conquest domination of the Marches by the Norman invaders. William FitzOsbern was responsible for laying out the new street plan of the City outside the Saxon defences in around 1068. The new town plan was focused on a large triangular market place, with Union Street and the Northern end of St.Owen's Street on the Eastern side, Commercial Street and the properties on the northern side of High town to the North, and the southern side of High Town and St. Peter's square to the South.

Settlers were granted the right to occupy burgages laid out in narrow plots running at right angles to the new market square. Access roads to the backs of these properties developed; Maylord street would have been the back lane to properties on the northern side of High Town and Commercial Street, with Bath Street forming the back lane to properties along St.Owen's Street.

Bath Street may have been the main approach to the city from the South East. Union Street, the former Gaol Street, would have developed as the main Northern approach to the new Norman market place. Each of these thoroughfares was truncated by the layout of the new defensive circuit laid out in the late C12th. This consisted of a deep ditch with a rampart formed from the redeposited material excavated from the ditch with a timber-laced revetment inside the line of the ditch. A new stretch of road may have developed within this new defensive circuit, joining Gaol Street to St.Owen's Street, either when the new defences were constructed or during the building of the City wall, which started in the late C13th.

The site therefore lies in a potentially very sensitive position, close to the line of the city wall with the remaining portion of the C12th rampart and a possible road crossing the site. Once the City wall was completed, the northern end of Union street and Commercial street became occupied by one of the major gateways into the city, known as Bye Street Gate, or Biscopsgate. This related to the fact that the land had been held by the Bishop of Hereford. Later the ownership passed to the Jews of Hereford, who were very influential in the City and had tenure of the area known as Maylord Orchard. A charter dated 20th November 1271, signed by Henry 111 at Westminster

made a grant of "all lands in Biscopesgate, Hereford" formerly held by Mansell the Jew to Thomas Thebaud, son of William.

The layout of the burgages around the new market area site seems to have quickly become fossilised, and remains essentially intact to this day. The land use on and around the site, however has changed greatly. The City Gaol, or Bridewell , seems to have been sited within the complex of buildings behind Bye Street Gate from the late medieval period. The open courts associated with this probably covered the area now occupied by Bastion Mews (T.W.N.F.C 1994, part 1, p103). There is therefore a possibility that yard surfaces and other structures associated with the gaol remain intact. Mr. Dutton Thompson has reported that his father uncovered what he thought might have been a lime pit whilst digging on the site.

On Taylor's Map of the city, 1757 the site is shown as being open, with open allotments and Orchards covering the ground. A narrow lane is shown as passing from Union Street parallel to the current access and then turning North to approach the City wall at the point where a Bastion is shown. Taylor may well have copied the positions of the Bastions on his plan from Speede's earlier map, and these are by no means accurate, however. This alleyway does seem to have been preserved and is still in use.

The City Gaol and its outlying areas continued in use until 1842, when it was finally pulled down. The Gates of City Wall itself were demolished in the 1850's. In 1850 Harding's Iron and Brass Foundry was established on the land immediately to the North of Bastion Mews, the line of the City wall dividing the sites.

This building was only finally demolished in 1966 when the City Ring Road was being built (pers.comm. G.Roberts, City Surveyor). A garage and spray shop was in operation on the immediate area of the site until the early 1970's, when it was destroyed by fire. The buried fuel tanks and hydraulic lift are associated with this phase of the site's history.

A review of the published archaeological excavations in the immediate area of Bastion Mews and in close proximity to the line of the medieval defences in this part of the city, together with personal knowledge of the likely stratigraphy gained through conducting excavations on the line of the defences (Wall Street

1987, Deen's Court 1987, Godsells Garage 1997), indicates that if ground disturbance has not removed all traces of the archaeological record then the most likely feature to have survived is the tail of the late C12th gravel rampart.

This feature has been observed during many of the excavations in this area in similar proximity to the line of the city wall. It can occur as little as 0.5-1m below the modern ground surface. At the Godsells Garage site it lay within 1m of the surface underneath a layer of made ground It was up to 1.2-1.6m thick. The rampart is made up of relatively clean pink gravel , of varying coarseness. This was material re-deposited during the digging of the town ditch. Traces of turf layers can sometimes be seen, and in places this feature has been found overlying yard surfaces and pits of late Saxon date (Maylord Orchards Watching Brief, 1994). Stone chippings and other debris relating to the construction of the city wall in the period from 1224-1265 A.D have been encountered on other sites close to the line of the City wall (Bath Street HAS 257). As the wall fell into disuse and the defensive embankment lowered much of the later archaeological layers may well have been disturbed, with the ground level being lowered and the material reused to fill the ditch. The layers above the rampart would therefore be of comparatively late date, and have a high probability of having been disturbed.

In summary the site is a potentially high area of archaeological interest due to its proximity to the line of the City Wall and late C12th defences, with some possibility of Saxon occupation being encountered in the lower strata. It seems likely, however that much of the earlier archaeologically sensitive material will have been destroyed by ground disturbance in the late Victorian and early modern period. The most likely archaeological evidence to have survived this would be the re-deposited gravel tail of the C12th rampart, possibly containing evidence of the construction of the City Wall, or features or deposits relating to the use of the site as open courts associated with the City Gaol.

4. Purpose and aims of fieldwork

The aims of the watching brief were:

1. To monitor the drilling of boreholes on the site.
2. To record the cores retrieved from these boreholes.
3. To record the presence of sensitive archaeological material within these cores, and to retrieve any potential dating evidences.
4. To ensure that sufficient data is recorded to enable an accurate section of the stratigraphy to be drawn up.
5. To ensure that if any environmental evidence is preserved, that a sufficient sample be retained to allow for further analysis.
6. To ensure that the location and depth of the boreholes are accurately record on a suitably scaled plan.

5. Field methodology

Mr. Dutton Thompson engaged the services of Geotechnical Engineers Ltd (of Rock House, Lower Tuffley Lane, Gloucester) to drill eight boreholes (see fig 1 for location of bores). The concrete yard surface was first removed with a cylinder-cutting device. A Competitor Rig (see illustration on front cover) was then used to remove cores to a depth of three metres by means of a percussion driver. Each core was removed in 1m sections, which tapered progressively. The initial core was of 6" diameter and the final core of approximateley 4" diameter. Each core was removed intact and stored inside a clear plastic sleeve, allowing for visual inspection and recording of the cores. Once the core is removed from the rig and the clear plastic shield split open samples of the core material can be retrieved at any depth required, and stored separately in heavy gauge plastic sample bags. Samples were taken from cores C, D & B and sequentially numbered. The location and depth of samples taken were noted in the site log book and on section drawings. Soil samples retrieved will be retained for further analysis, and the results of this included in the final publication.

The presence of live services was ascertained before work started. No live services or drains were found to cross the site. Confirmation of the presence of live services was requested in advance from the relevant utility companies, and a C.A.T scanner was used by the contractors to confirm this.

Each core retrieved was drawn accurately as a section at 1:10 scale and cross referenced with a full description of the different soil types. Any evidence of waterlogging was noted, and numbered samples kept of any material with a high potential for the survival of environmental evidence. The numbers of samples kept were included on the section drawing, along with the relevant entry in the photographic log.

All soil descriptions, photographic records, drawing numbers and sample numbers were recorded on the relevant site forms and in the site log. All drawings are numbered, initialled and show the borehole number, site reference number, NGR or site grid reference and the scale at which they were drawn. Each core sample was photographed next to an appropriate scale rule, and a board displaying the number and the depth of the core. Each photographic exposure was recorded in the photographic log.

The location, id number and depth of each borehole was recorded on a suitably scaled plan and indexed in the site logbook.

Staff carrying out the monitoring of the borehole followed all the guidelines laid down in the Archenfield Archaeology Health and Safety Policy and completed all relevant documentation relating to the Risk Assessment for the project. Suitable safety clothing (fluorescent jacket, ear defenders and hard-hat, steel toe capped boots and rubber gloves) was worn on site at all times.

Staff identified themselves to the contractor and agreed a code of conduct for the monitoring procedures.

Archenfield Archaeology conforms to the IFA's Code of Conduct and code of Approved Practice for the Regulation of Contractual arrangements in Field Archaeology. All projects are carried out in accordance with IFA Standards and Guidance or Draft Standards and Guidance (where applicable).

6. Results

Eight boreholes were sunk, and three cores removed (A-H on fig.1) in metre sections from each one. The condition of the cores indicated that beneath the concrete yard surface (**Context 2**) (an average 40cm thick) the ground has remained substantially undisturbed. Clear stratigraphic horizons were observed in all the cores retrieved and these were drawn at a scale of 1:10 and a full description made in the site logbook. A full description of the soil matrices is included in the appendix.

In cores B, C, D, E & F a very compact layer of gravel was observed at depths varying from .7m to 2m, with an average thickness of .75m. This is provisionally interpreted as being the late C12th gravel rampart. This is of considerable archaeological importance as the rampart only survives in a few points of the defensive circuit. One piece of green glazed roof-tile (fabric A7b, Vince, 1990) which has been found to be present in mid C13th contexts in Hereford was retrieved from core 1 of borehole E. This lay immediately above the possible rampart material which tends to confirm that this is earlier than the C13th.

Other features seem to cut the rampart material or to lie underneath it. These lower strata may relate to the pre-Norman occupation of the area and are thus of great archaeological potential. When attempting to reconstruct the stratigraphic record from boreholes taken by this method it must be realised that considerable compression of the cores tends to occur, especially where the ground is compact. In two cases it was only possible to retrieve two 1m sections from the boreholes as the ground was so compact that there was a risk of damaging the rig.

The borehole survey was conducted with the primary aim of ascertaining the potential spread of contamination from the buried fuel tanks, but once six boreholes were complete a further four were placed to attempt to answer specifically archaeological questions. Boreholes E & F were sunk close to the northern and eastern boundary of the area in order to determine the presence of the rampart and the any material relating to the construction of the City wall. In addition it was felt that any structures associated with the use of the yard as part of the City Gaol might be detected in this area. The results of the analysis of the cores show that the rampart is probably in existence in these areas and is in a good state of preservation.

The cores from borehole F could only be taken down 2m because very compact material was encountered. There seems to be some evidence that the rampart was cut through at this point (F), and that stone chippings possibly relating to the construction of the wall are mixed in with the rampart material in this area.

7. Publication and dissemination

Report preparation and contents

The report on the Watching Brief has been prepared by an appropriately qualified archaeologist in line with the recommendations laid down in the Project Brief (prepared by the author in consultation with the County Archaeological adviser).

The finished report will be prepared for publication in an appropriate archaeological journal or other publication. This should take place within a period of twelve months after the report is completed. Copies of the finished report should be forwarded to the Herefordshire Sites and Monuments Record, Hereford Record Office and the City Museum.

8. Archive deposition

The project archive is to be prepared and stored in accordance with the guidelines laid down in the IFA guidelines for the preparation and storage of archives. A copy of the archive will be stored with an appropriate institution (Hereford City Museum or Record Office).

9. Project management

Timetable

The work commenced on 3/7/98 and finished on the same day. The report was written immediately after completion of the work.

Staffing

The project manager, who will also carried out all fieldwork, was Huw Sherlock BA, DIPARCH, AIFA, an appropriately qualified archaeologist with direct local experience of the archaeology of Hereford. He is a member of the Institute of Field Archaeologists and holds suitable archaeological qualifications. The C.V's of all staff members are held on file and can be made available for inspection by the monitoring authority if required.

Health and safety policy / risk assessment

Archenfield Archaeology operates a full Health and Safety policy and all staff are expected to make themselves aware of its contents and abide by its stipulations. A Risk Assessment procedure was completed in relation to the conduct of the work and all staff were expected to work within the recommendations laid down by this. Copies of all relevant documentation for the Risk Assessment has been retained and a copy kept in the site archive. Suitable safety clothing (fluorescent jacket, ear defenders and hard-hat, steel toe capped boots and rubber gloves) was worn on site at all times. Staff identified themselves to the contractor and agreed a code of conduct for the monitoring procedures. All accidents are to be noted in an accident report book stating the nature of the injury and how it occurred. All staff ensured that they are adequately immunised against Tetanus and that precautions against the contraction of leptospirosis are observed.

Monitoring procedures

Fieldwork was monitored by Mr. R.Shoesmith, archaeological consultant to the Investigating authority for the Hereford area of Archaeological Importance, the County and City of Hereford Archaeology Trust. Copies of the Project Design were submitted for approval to the monitoring authority before the start of the survey. Reasonable notice of the commencement of operations was given in advance.

10. Appendix

Soil descriptions

N.B. all the cores retrieved lay beneath a concrete cap of an average 35cm thickness. All measurements given relate to the depth of the core from where sampling commenced, and not to the distance below the current ground surface.

Borehole A, Core # 1

0-0.25cm	Make up layer of mixed clay soil and broken brick (Context 3)
0.25-0.60 cm	Darker sandy Silt with clay and gravel, compact, some bone present. (Context 4)

Borehole A, Core # 2

0.60-1.10m	Dark brown clay with silt with charcoal inclusions and little gravel, very soft. (Context 5)
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Borehole A, Core # 3

1.10m-1.80m	Dark brown clay with silt with increased percentage of clay and becoming increasingly softer. High water content. (Context 6)
Notes:	The cores from this borehole required hardly any use of the percussion cap after the initial core was taken, and the final core was taken by allowing the weight of the corer to sink down unaided. This shows that a large waterlogged pit or water course (Context 7) is present in this area.

Borehole B, Core #1

0.25m	Make-up layer of gravel and concrete, large (<3cm) rounded pebbles and angular stones, very loose. (Context 8)
0.25-0.40m	Compact, sandy silt with high clay content and charcoal inclusions, mixed with 20% gravel. (Context 9)
0.40-0.8m	Compact mid-brown sandy silt with 30% coarse gravel content, orangey clay and rounded pebbles (< 2cm) and angular pieces of sandstone and some metal working slag (bloom). Sample #3. (Context 10 RAMPART)
0.8-1m	Coarse very compact mid brown gravel with rounded, sub angular pebbles in a sand matrix. Large (<5cm) broken pieces of sandstone, (Context 11)

Borehole B, Core #2

1.m-1.2m	Large (<5cm) broken sandstone fragments, loose. (Context 12)
1.2m-1.5m	Mid brown sandy silt with approximately 20% gravel mixed in, high clay content and flecks of charcoal. (Context 13)
1.5m-1.9m	Coarse gravel (rounded pebbles <2cm and coarse sand) some larger (<3cm) sub-rounded pebbles and flecks of charcoal. (Context 14)
1.9m-2.0m	Darker grey-brown sandy silt with clay and some larger (<4cm) subrounded stones, possibly cess. Sample #4(Context 15)

Borehole B, Core #3

2.0m-2.10m	Grey-brown cessy material, high organic content and some bone, sample #4 <i>(Context 16)</i>
2.1m-2.3m	Looser, sandy gravel mixed with clay and larger pebbles (<3cm). Large pieces of charcoal and decayed wood (?) Sample #5. <i>(Context 17)</i>
2.3m-3.0m	Pinkish clean gravel with large angular sandstone fragments, progressively finer pink sand at base. (NATURAL - <i>(Context 18)</i>)

Borehole C, Core #1

0.35-0.55m	Silty black soil with brick inclusions and large angular pebbles. <i>(Context 19)</i>
0.55m-0.88m	Orangey-pink clay and gravel, some charcoal and brick, compact. <i>(Context 20)</i>

Borehole C, Core #2

0.88m-1.25m	Decayed, broken sandstone, very soft and powdery, high mica content. <i>(Context 21)</i>
1.25m-1.60m	Sandy silt, mid brown with high gravel content and large (<4cm) pieces of sandstone, very compact. Also some bone present. Sample# 1 <i>(Context 22)</i>

Borehole C, Core #3

1.60m-2.0m	Sandy silt, mid brown with high gravel content and large (<4cm) pieces of sandstone, very compact turns into progressively cleaner pink gravel with rounded pebbles (>0.5cm), fairly loose. <i>(Context 23)</i>
2.0m-2.17m	Dark brown friable sandy soil with large charcoal pieces and gravel Sample #2 <i>(Context 24)</i>
2.17m-2.40m	Dark.brown gravel with coarse sand . Coarse textured and fairly compact <i>(Context 25)</i>

Borehole D, Core #1

0.2m-0.3m	Make-up layer, clayey silt with sand and brick fragments <i>(Context 26)</i>
0.3m-0.6m	Orange clay mixed with gravel, pebbles and sand, very compact. <i>(Context 27)</i>
0.6m-0.8m	Mid brown sandy silt with gravel inclusions. <i>(Context 28)</i>
0.8-1.0m	Loose angular stones (<3cm) and gravel. <i>(Context 29)</i>

Borehole D, Core #2

1.0m-1.5m	Mid brown sandy silt with high (50-60%) charcoal and gravel content, very homogenous and compact, possible pit fill <i>(Context 30)</i>
1.5m-1.7m	As above but higher gravel content and orange clay mixed in. <i>(Context 31)</i>

Borehole D, Core#3

1.7m-2.3m	Mid brown sandy silt with high (50-60%) charcoal and gravel content, very homogenous and compact, possible pit fill? (Context 32)
2.3m-2.7m	Very fine grey sandy silt, possible cess, Sample #6. (Context 33)
2.7m-2.8m	Clean pink gravel and sand, very loose. (Context 34)

Borehole E, Core#1

0.4m-0.6m	Mid brown sandy silt with brick inclusions (make up layer). (Context 35)
0.6m-0.7m	As above with gravel and large rounded pebbles. (Context 36)
0.7m-1.0m	Dark brown greyish sandy silt with gravel and flecks of orange clay. (Context 37)
Notes:	One fragment of green glazed roof tile was recovered from the base of this core.

Borehole E, Core#2

1.0m-1.2m	Loose gravel with large (<4cm) rounded pebbles. (Context 38) RAMPART
1.2m-1.6m	Fine sandy silt with large amount of charcoal and some gravel. (Context 39)
1.6m-2.00m	As above mixed with larger pieces of angular sandstone and rounded pebbles, increasing amount of stone in bottom 15cm. (Context 40)

Borehole E, Core#3

2.0m-2.4m	Sandstone fragments and coarse, pink sand in pink gravel matrix, very hard and compact (became loose on lifting). (Context 41)
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Borehole F, Core#1

0.4m-0.8m	Dark humic garden type soil with high charcoal content mixed with gravel, soft. (Context 42)
0.8m-1.0m	Double skin of brick (Context 43)

Borehole F, Core#2

1.0m-1.3m	Brick powder. (Context 44)
1.3m-1.55m	Dark, smooth clayey silt (possible turf layer)? (Context 45)
1.55m-1.75m	Orange clay and decayed sandstone mixed with brown sandy silt and gravel. (Context 46)
1.75m-2.00m	As above with increased percentage of gravel (20-30%) and decayed sandstone. Clean pink gravel at base, very hard and compact. It was not possible to retrieve a third core from this borehole. (Context 47)

Borehole G, Core#1

0.2m-0.3m	Made ground, Ash and charcoal with sandy silt, soft. (Context 48)
0.3m-0.45m	Sandy silt and charcoal mixed with gravel, compact. (Context 49)
0.45m-0.9m	Orangey clay and mid brown sandy silt mixed with gravel, very compact. (Context 50)
0.9m-1.0m	Very hard pink gravel and clay, gravel very fine with few pebbles, compact. (Context 51)

Borehole G, Core#2

1.0m-1.6m	Very dark brown sandy silt, very loose and mixed with gravel and charcoal. (Context 52)
1.6m-1.8m	Orangey clay and sandy silt, very fine. One large piece (5cm diameter) broken sandstone. (Context 53)
1.8m-2.0m	Dark brown sandy silt and gravel with charcoal inclusions, compact. (Context 54)

Borehole G, Core#3

2.0m-2.3m	Dark brown sandy silt and gravel with charcoal inclusions, compact, becoming less compact with a higher gravel content. (Context 55)
2.3m-2.7m	Orangey clay and mid brown sandy silt mixed with gravel, compact. (Context 56)
2.7m-3.0m	Mid brown sandy silt with inclusions of large (<2cm) angular pebbles with fine, sandy gravel. (Context 57)

Borehole H, Core#1

0.25m-0.75m	Dark brown silty sand with large (<4cm) pieces of angular sandstone. (Context 58)
0.75m-0.85m	Large pieces (<5cm) of loose, broken sandstone . (Context 59)
0.85-1.0m	Orange clay and gravel, very compact. (Context 60)

Borehole H, Core#2

1.0m-1.25m	Very loose sandstone fragments. (Context 61)
1.25m-1.55m	Dark brown silty clay with charcoal, very soft. (Context 62)
1.55m-1.90m	Pinkish clay mixed with larger sandstone pieces and gravel. (Context 63)
1.90m-2.0m	Loose, pinkish gravel and angular pieces of sandstone. (Context 64)

Notes: It was not possible to retrieve a third core from this borehole.

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