



**ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF AT THE SQUARE,
RETFORD, NOTTINGHAMSHIRE**

ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF REPORT

Report Number 2014/35 October 2014



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CONTENTS

NON-TECHNICAL SUMMARY	III
KEY PROJECT INFORMATION	IV
1 INTRODUCTION	1
2 LOCATION, GEOLOGY AND TOPOGRAPHY	1
3 METHODOLOGY	1
3.1 Aims.....	1
3.2 Methodology.....	1
4 ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND	1
5 EXCAVATION RESULTS	2
5.1 Tree extraction	2
5.2 Ground clearance and foundation trenches	2
6 DISCUSSION	3
7 CONCLUSIONS	3
8 BIBLIOGRAPHY	4
9 FIGURES	5
10 PLATES	6
APPENDIX 1 – INDEX TO ARCHIVE	8
APPENDIX 2 – CONTEXT LIST & TABLE OF FINDS	9
APPENDIX 3 – WRITTEN SCHEME OF INVESTIGATION	10

Figures

- Figure 1: Site location
- Figure 2: Trench plan
- Figure 3: Trench section

Plates

Cover View of site

- Plate 1: Working shot of tree root and manhole during removal 6
- Plate 2: Structure [1003] below modern structure [1001] 6
- Plate 3: Structure [1005] in north-facing section of south foundation 7
- Plate 4: Subsoil [1007], sealed by yard surface [1006] 7

Tables

- Table 1: List of archive contents 8
- Table 2: List of contexts 9
- Table 3: Table of finds..... 9

NON-TECHNICAL SUMMARY

This report presents the results of an archaeological watching brief at 18/18A The Square, Retford. The monitored groundworks exposed predominantly post-medieval features, the majority of which related to the adjacent 18th-century listed building.

Several archaeological deposits and features were identified within the Site, including a post-medieval subsoil, the remains of several walls, a yard surface and the foundations of a small building. While the majority of these features were 19th-century red brick structures, one was a 20th-century concrete wall. This had been constructed on the truncated remains of an 18th- to 19th-century brick wall.

The former yard surface comprised a single skin of red bricks, with the area bounded by a red brick wall. The foundations of a small, brick-built structure are likely to have been associated with a now-demolished lean-to building, the scar of which was visible on the wall of the adjacent listed building.

Although the results from the watching brief were relatively limited, they suggest that post-medieval and modern developments may not have eradicated evidence of earlier phases of occupation at similar sites in the immediate area.

KEY PROJECT INFORMATION

Project Name	The Square, Retford
ArcHeritage Project No.	4109141
Report status	Final
Type of Project	Watching Brief
Client	Sambar Ltd
Planning Application No.	13/01068/LBA
NGR	SK 7044 8112
OASIS no.	archerit1-196596
Author	Richard Jackson
Illustrations	Mark Stenton
Editor	Mark Stenton, Glyn Davies
Report Number and Date	2014/35 02.10.2014

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1 INTRODUCTION

This report provides details of the archaeological watching brief undertaken at 18/18A The Square, Retford. The watching brief was undertaken on the excavation of foundation trenches for an extension to an 18th-century Grade II listed building. These works were carried out to satisfy an archaeological planning condition imposed by the Nottinghamshire Development Control Archaeologist. ArcHeritage were commissioned to undertake the watching brief by Sambar Ltd.

2 LOCATION, GEOLOGY AND TOPOGRAPHY

The site is located to the rear of 18/18A The Square, Retford (Figure 1). The Square, the location for the town's weekly market, is located within the historic core of Retford. The building at 18/18A is an 18th-century Grade II listed structure, located between The Square and the River Idle which runs through King's Park to the south.

The Site has been used as a car park for several years, with some landscape planting. The natural geology comprises post-glacial alluvial sand and gravels overlying Triassic Nottingham Castle Sandstone bedrock (British Geological Survey).

3 METHODOLOGY

3.1 Aims

The aim of the watching brief was to record any archaeological remains exposed by groundworks associated with construction. The watching brief was undertaken by Richard Jackson of ArcHeritage between the 1st and 4th September 2014.

3.2 Methodology

The watching brief comprised continuous and comprehensive monitoring of the excavation of all foundation trenches, overburden and the removal of a substantial tree from the Site's north-west corner. The archaeological recording methodology is detailed in Section 7 of the Written Scheme of Investigation (see Appendix 3). The general width of the foundation trenches was between 0.8-1m, although the area excavated along the northern edge of the Site was 3.6m wide (north-south), due to the substantial quantities of unstable made ground in this area.

4 ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Retford is a historic town with medieval origins. Recorded in the 1086 Domesday survey, the town was established as a borough in 1105. Retford received a Market Charter for a Thursday market in 1246 and a charter for a Saturday market in 1275.

Little archaeological work has taken place in The Square (ARS 2010). A 2001 watching brief on the installation of a new water main, however, uncovered a cobbled former surface of the Market Square. This feature is likely to have been 14th- to 16th-century in date. Medieval to modern finds, including ceramics, animal bone and fragments of leather, were also recovered. The absence of structural remains suggests that the current roads in which the water main

was installed are likely to be long-established routes that may reflect the medieval street layout in this part of Retford.

5 EXCAVATION RESULTS

5.1 Tree extraction

The first stage of monitored groundworks consisted of the removal of a root system of a substantial tree which had been growing in the Site's north-west corner. The roots penetrated the ground over a considerable distance and excavation to a depth of 1.2m area, over an area of 5.3m x 3.6m, was necessary to remove the root ball in its entirety. Upon extraction, it became apparent that the sycamore roots had penetrated an underlying engineer inspection chamber associated with a redundant drainage system (Plate 1). The deposit impacted upon by tree growth was ascribed the context number [1000]. This was a mixed backfill deposit, containing inclusions of 19th- and 20th-century brick rubble fragments in a dark brown silty sand matrix. One base fragment of a 19th-century stoneware bottle was recovered from this context during monitoring.

5.2 Ground clearance and foundation trenches

The tarmac of the modern car park surface was removed by mechanical excavator. General ground level reduction ceased at this point, exposing a loose bedding layer associated with the car park surface. The foundation trenches for the new construction were then excavated around the perimeter of the stripped area to a depth of 1.2-1.5m. The primary aim of the excavation of the foundation trenches was to reach consistent deposits to provide a stable footing for foundations. Slightly more material had to be removed along the north edge of the Site before stable natural gravel deposits were reached. This was due to the disturbance associated with tree growth and also to the insertion of 20th-century services. The foundation trenches were approximately 1m wide on the south west and east sides and nearly 2m wide on the north side.

The excavation of foundation trenches exposed predominantly modern features. In the north-west corner the structures observed comprised post medieval and modern walling. A modern red brick wall [1001] served as the west boundary wall between the Site and an access road immediately to the west. The base of the concrete foundation for wall [1001] was bonded directly on top of the truncated remains of an 18th- to 19th-century wall [1003] (Plate 2). This feature shared the same north-south orientation as [1001]. Its foundation had been constructed directly on top of natural gravel deposits [1008]. The wall was two courses in width and was stretcher-built, with red bricks measuring 23.5 x 12 x 6cm. Its vertical extent measured 0.5m. Structure [1003] was interpreted as an earlier boundary wall.

Excavations along the north perimeter exposed a continuous foundation wall [1002], which was constructed from reinforced concrete. This was interpreted as a modern structural barrier between two different sites. The concrete may have served to prevent the spread of tree roots from one site to the other.

Structure [1004] was exposed in the east-facing section of the east foundation trench. This feature consisted of 12 courses of red brick foundation, orientated north-south, with a linear extent of three metres. A 'scar' on the standing west gable demonstrated that a small structure with a pitched roof had once adjoined the gable end. The location and alignment of

wall [1004], and the gable scar, means that wall [1004] was interpreted as the foundation of a lean-to extension that had formerly been present on the gable wall of the adjacent standing building.

Excavation of the south foundation trench exposed a red brick wall [1005] (Plate 3), similar in construction to [1004]. Structure [1005] was visible in the entirety of the north-facing section of the south foundation trench. Eight courses of stretcher-built brickwork were visible in section, supported by header-built foundation course. The absence of a more substantial spreading foundation suggests that, rather than the foundation for a building, [1005] was the south boundary wall of a yard associated with the property.

The interpretation of [1005] as the boundary wall for a yard was supported by the presence of red brick surface [1006] (Plate 4). This feature was observed in section at various points along the foundation trenches, sealed beneath the bedding material for the tarmac car park surface. Structure [1006] comprised a single layer of 19th-century red brick, laid on edge, and was interpreted as a 19th-century yard surface.

The excavation of the west foundation trench impacted upon a buried soil [1007]. This deposit was sealed beneath the bedding layer for yard surface [1006] and was directly on top of the natural gravel and sand deposits. Deposit [1007] was 0.6 to 0.7m in depth and comprised a grey-brown silty sand, with occasional inclusions of small rounded pebbles and occasional charcoal flecks. A single sherd of pancheon rim, most likely 18th- to 19th-century in origin, was recovered during excavation. In the absence of any more definitive evidence, deposit [1007] was interpreted as a post-medieval subsoil. However, a single sherd, does not provide the most secure dating for this soil horizon or how long it took to develop.

6 DISCUSSION

Despite the Site's location within Retford's historic core, no medieval features were identified within the development area. It is possible, however, that a post-medieval subsoil deposit may have begun to form during the medieval period. This suggests that all earlier archaeological deposits may not have been eradicated by 18th- and 19th-century developments associated with the adjacent listed building. Despite post-medieval and modern developments, similar sites in the immediate area may also retain evidence of earlier phases of occupation.

7 CONCLUSIONS

Several archaeological deposits and features were identified within the Site, including a post-medieval subsoil, the remains of several walls, a yard surface and the foundations of a small building. While the majority of these were 19th-century red brick structures, one was a 20th-century concrete wall. This had been constructed on the truncated remains of an 18th- to 19th-century brick wall.

The former yard surface comprised a single skin of red bricks, with the area bounded by a red brick wall. The foundations of a small, brick-built structure are likely to have been associated with a now-demolished lean-to building, the scar of which was visible on the wall of the adjacent listed building.

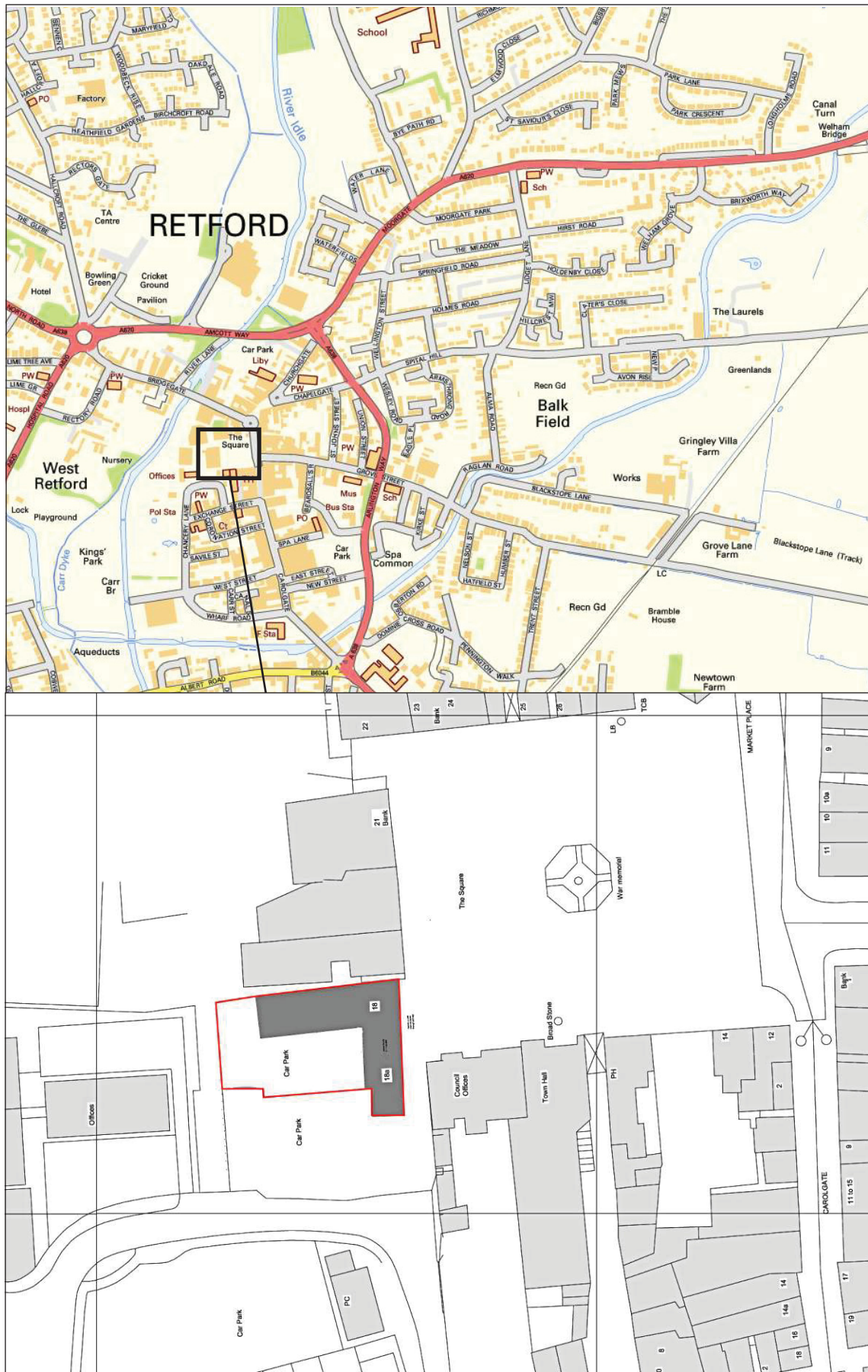
Although the results from the watching brief were relatively limited, they suggest that post-medieval and modern developments may not have eradicated evidence of earlier phases of occupation at similar sites in the immediate area.

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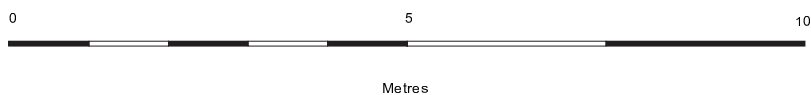
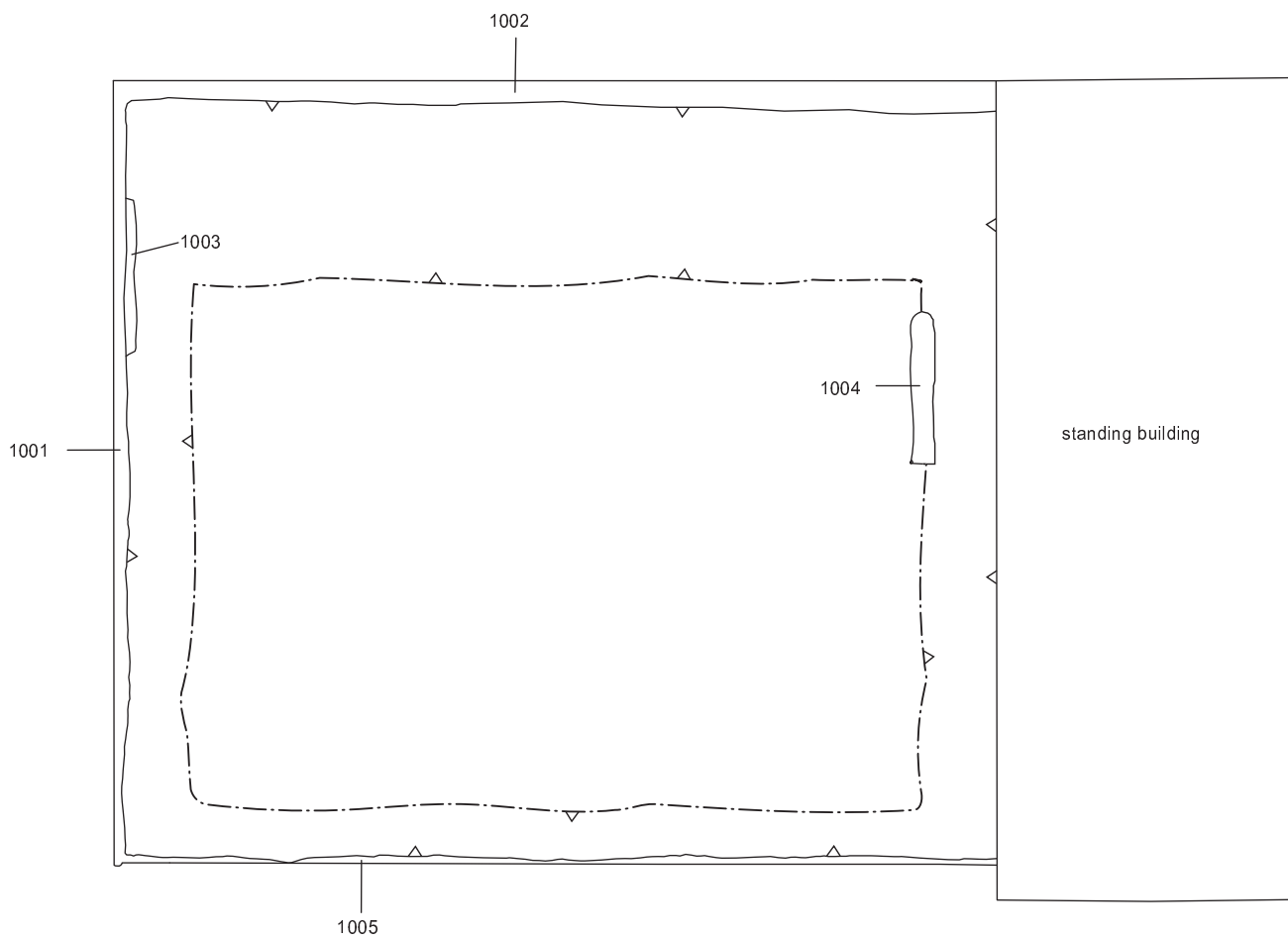
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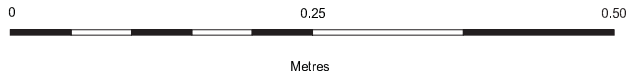
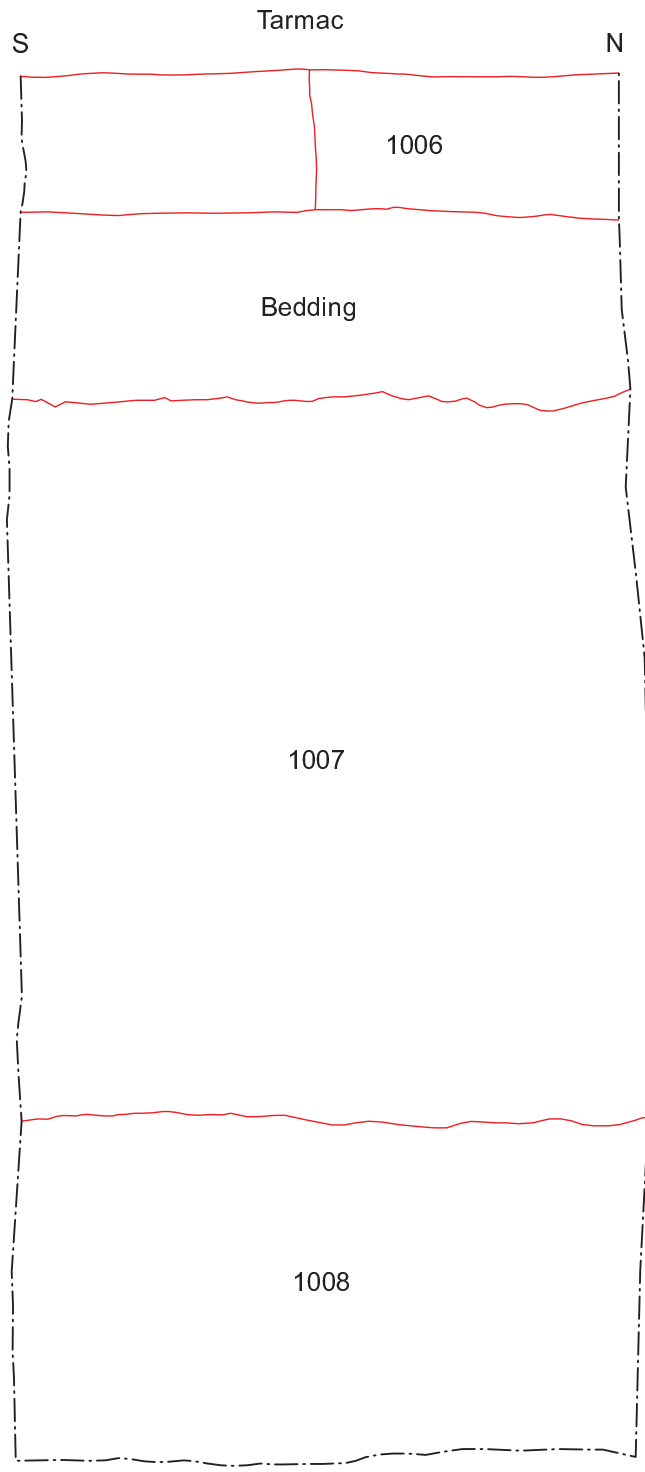
9 FIGURES



Map supplied by Robin Ashley Architects LLP.
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Site centred on NGR SK 7044 8112





10 PLATES



Plate 1: Working shot of tree root and manhole during removal



Plate 2: Structure [1003] below modern structure [1001]. Viewed facing west, 1m scale.



Plate 3: Structure [1005] in north-facing section of south foundation. Viewed facing south-east. 1m scale.



Plate 4: Subsoil [1007], sealed by yard surface [1006]. Viewed facing east. 1m scale.

APPENDIX 1 – INDEX TO ARCHIVE

Item	Number of items
Context register	1
Context sheets	8
Photographic register	1
Drawing register	1
Original drawings	2
Digital photographs	34
Finds register	1
Written Scheme of Investigation	1
Report	1

Table 1: List of archive contents

APPENDIX 2 – CONTEXT LIST & TABLE OF FINDS

Table 2: List of contexts

Context no	Description
1000	Mixed backfill deposit.
1001	Modern boundary wall.
1002	Reinforced concrete foundation.
1003	Truncated 19 th -century wall foundation.
1004	North-south red brick wall foundation.
1005	East-west red brick wall foundation. Probable yard wall.
1006	Red brick yard surface.
1007	Post-medieval subsoil.
1008	Sand and gravel natural deposits.

Table 3: Table of finds

Context no	Description
1000	Stoneware bottle, 19 th -century. Stamped '-ARRENS –QUID BLACKING'
1007	One small abraded rim sherd, brown-glazed coarse earthenware. 18 th to 19 th centuries.

APPENDIX 3 – WRITTEN SCHEME OF INVESTIGATION

WRITTEN SCHEME OF INVESTIGATION FOR ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF

Site Location:	18/18A The Square, Retford
NGR:	SK 7044 8112
Proposal:	An extension is to be built to the rear of a commercial property.
Planning ref:	13/01068/LBA
Prepared for:	Sambar Ltd, by ArcHeritage, [25th February 2014]
Status of WSI:	Final

1 SUMMARY

1.1 This WSI relates to a proposed extension to an existing building. The extension is to the rear of 18/18A The Square, Retford and is for a new glass fronted A3 or A4 unit with mezzanine and a new side opening in the side.

1.2 The following archaeological condition has been imposed:

‘No development shall take place within the application site until details of a scheme for an archaeological watching brief have been submitted to and agreed in writing by the District Planning Authority. Thereafter, the scheme shall be implemented in full accordance with the approved details.’

1.3 This Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) has been prepared in response to a requirements of the planning condition. The work will be carried out in accordance with the Standards and Guidance of the IFA and industry best practice.

2 SITE LOCATION & DESCRIPTION

2.1 The site is located to the rear of 18/18a The Square, Retford (Figure 1) (NGR SK 7044 8112). The Square which lies at the centre of Retford is the location of Retford Market. 18/18A The Square, located in the south west corner of The Square is an 18th century Grade II listed building, currently a commercial premises, including both offices and retail. The site is located between The Square and the River Idle that runs through Retford.

2.2 The site which covers an area of 85m2 is currently used for car parking and landscape planting.

3 DESIGNATIONS & CONSTRAINTS

3.1 18/18A The Square, Retford is a Grade II listed building (1370375) one of 13, 18th and early 19th Century listed buildings, around The Square. 18/18A forms a group with No.s 18, 18A, 19, 21, 22, 23, 24, building between Nos 24 and 25, 25, 26 and 27. No, 18/18A is a two storey red brick building with a central archway that provides access through to the rear of the building. Listed building consent has been sought and obtained for the proposed development.

3.2 The site lies within the East Retford and Market Place Character Area of the Retford Conservation Area. This area is characterised by its medieval thoroughfares and former burgage plots, with buildings sited close to the highway. The 18th century market is surrounded by buildings with impressive façades.

4 ARCHAEOLOGICAL INTEREST

4.1 Retford is a historic town with medieval origins, it was recorded in the Domesday Book, was established as a borough in 1105 and received a Market Charter in 1246 for a Thursday market and a charter for a Saturday market in 1275.

4.2 Little archaeological work has taken place in The Square (ARS 2010), although a watching brief on the installation of a new water main in 2001 uncovered a cobbled former surface of the Market Square, possibly 14th-16th century in date. In addition finds of medieval to modern date including ceramics, animal bone and fragments of leather were recovered. The absence of structural remains suggests that the current roads in which the water main was installed are probably long standing and reflect the medieval street layout in this area.

5. GROUNDWORKS TO BE MONITORED

5.1 This work will comprise a continuous/comprehensive watching brief, on the excavation of all foundations, trenches services and any subsequent groundworks involving excavation. Any alterations to the agreed watching brief methodology set out in this WSI will only be made following agreement from the Nottinghamshire Development Control Archaeologist.

6 DELAYS TO THE DEVELOPMENT SCHEDULE

6.1 All earth-moving machinery must be operated at an appropriate speed to allow the archaeologist to recognise, record and retrieve any archaeological deposits and material.

6.2 It is not intended that the archaeological monitoring should unduly delay site works. However, the archaeologist on site should be given the opportunity to observe, clean, assess and, where appropriate hand excavate, sample and record any exposed features and finds. In order to fulfil the requirements of this WSI, it may be necessary to halt the earth-moving activity to enable the archaeology to be recorded properly.

6.3 Plant or excavators shall not be operated in the immediate vicinity of archaeological remains until the remains have been recorded and the archaeologist on site has given explicit permission for operations to recommence at that location.

7 RECORDING METHODOLOGY

7.1 Archaeological features and deposits identified during the watching brief will be plotted on a plan of the site and located to the national grid.

7.2 Unique context numbers will be assigned to all archaeological deposits or structures. In archaeologically 'sterile' areas, soil layers will be described, but no context numbers will be assigned. Where assigned, each context will be described in full on a pro forma context record sheet in accordance with the accepted context record conventions.

7.3 Archaeological deposits will be planned at a basic scale of 1:50, with individual features requiring greater detail being planned at a scale of 1:20. Larger scales will be utilised as appropriate. Cross-sections of features will be drawn to a basic scale of 1:10 or 1:20 depending on the size of the feature. All drawings will be related to Ordnance Datum. Where it aids interpretation, structural remains will also be recorded in elevation. All drawings will be drawn on inert materials. All drawings will adhere to accepted drawing conventions

7.4 Photographs of archaeological deposits and features will be taken. This will include general views of entire features and of details such as sections as considered necessary. The photographic register will comprise 35mm format black and white prints and digital photography. All site photography will adhere to accepted photographic record guidelines.

7.5 Areas which are inaccessible (e.g. for health and safety reasons) will be recorded as thoroughly as possible within the site constraints. In these instances, recording may be entirely photographic, with sketch drawings only.

7.6 All finds will be collected and handled following the guidance set out in the IfA guidance for archaeological materials. Unstratified material will not be kept unless it is of exceptional intrinsic interest. Material discarded as a consequence of this policy will be described and quantified in the field. Finds of particular interest or fragility will be retrieved as Small Finds, and located on plans. Other finds, finds within the topsoil, and dense/discrete deposits of finds will be collected as Bulk Finds, bagged by context and material type. Any dense/discrete deposits will have their limits defined on the appropriate plan.

7.7 All artefacts and ecofacts will be appropriately packaged and stored under optimum conditions, as detailed in the RESCUE/UKIC publication *First Aid for Finds*, and recording systems must be compatible with the recipient museum.

7.8 All finds that fall within the purview of the Treasure Act (1996) will be reported to HM Coroner according to the procedures outlined in the Act, after discussion with the client and the local authority.

7.9 A soil sampling programme will be undertaken for the recovery and identification of charred and waterlogged remains where suitable deposits are identified. The collection and processing of environmental samples will be undertaken in accordance with English Heritage guidelines (English Heritage 2002). Environmental and soil specialists will be consulted during the course of the watching brief with regard to the implementation of this sampling programme. Soil samples of approximately 30 litres for flotation (or 100% of the features if less than this volume) will be removed from selected contexts. Judgement sampling will involve the removal of samples from secure contexts which appear to present either good conditions for preservation (e.g. burning or waterlogging) or which are significant in terms of archaeological interpretation or stratigraphy. If stratified deposit sequences with palaeoenvironmental potential are identified such sequences will be sampled systematically.

7.10 If industrial activity is detected, industrial samples and process residues will also be collected. Separate samples (c. 10ml) will be collected for micro-slugs (hammer-scale and spherical droplets) (English Heritage 2001).

7.11 Other samples will be taken, in consultation with ArcHeritage specialists and the English Heritage Regional Science Advisor, as appropriate (e.g. dendrochronology, soil micromorphology, monolith samples, C14, etc.). Material removed from site will be stored in appropriate controlled environments.

7.12 If human remains are identified, the Ministry of Justice and archaeological curator will be informed immediately. On discovery human remains will initially be left *in-situ*, covered and protected. The removal of human remains will only take place in compliance with environmental health regulations and following discussions with, and with the approval of, the Ministry of Justice. An osteoarchaeologist will be available to give advice on site. If remains are encountered that require removal, these will be excavated in accordance with recognised guidelines and retained for assessment. Any grave goods or coffin furniture will be retained for assessment.

7.13 Where a licence is issued, all human skeletal remains must be properly removed in accordance with the terms of that licence. Where a licence is not issued, the treatment of human remains will be in accordance with the requirements of Civil Law, IfA Technical Paper 13 (1993) and English Heritage guidance (2005).

8 REPORT & ARCHIVE PREPARATION

8.1 Upon completion of the groundworks, a report will be prepared to include the following:

- a) A non-technical summary of the results of the work.
- b) An introduction which will include the planning reference number, grid reference and dates when the fieldwork took place.
- c) An account of the methodology and results of the operation, describing archaeological deposits, structural data, associated finds and environmental data.
- d) A selection of photographs and drawings, including an overall plan of the site accurately identifying the areas monitored.
- e) Specialist artefact and environmental reports as necessary.
- f) Details of archive location and destination, together with a catalogue of what is contained in that archive.
- g) A copy of the key OASIS form details
- h) A copy of the WSI
- i) Additional photographic images may be supplied on a CDROM appended to the report

8.2 Copies of the report will be submitted to the commissioning body and the Nottinghamshire HER (also in PDF format).

8.3 The requirements for archive preparation and deposition will be addressed and undertaken in a manner agreed with the recipient museum. Bassetlaw Museum, Retford, have been contacted and have confirmed they would be the depository museum for the site archive and finds recovered.

8.4 Provision for the publication of results, if significant, will be made.

8.5 The owner of the Intellectual Property Rights (IPR) in the information and documentation arising from the work, would grant a licence to the County Council and the museum accepting the archive to use such documentation for their statutory functions and provide copies to third parties as an incidental to such functions. Under the Environmental Information Regulations (EIR), such documentation is required to be made available to enquirers if it meets the test of public interest. Any information disclosure issues would be resolved between the client and the archaeological contractor before completion of the work. EIR requirements do not affect IPR.

9 HEALTH AND SAFETY

9.1 Health and safety issues will take priority over archaeological matters and all archaeologists will comply with relevant Health and Safety Legislation.

9.2 A Risk Assessment will be prepared prior to the start of site works.

10 TIMETABLE & STAFFING

10.1 Site works are expected to start between April and June and the groundworks are likely to take between one to three days. On completion of the watching brief an assessment report will be prepared. This report will take up to four weeks to complete.

10.2 Specialist staff available for this work are as follows:

Head of Artefact Research - Dr. Ailsa Mainman

Human Remains - Malin Holst (York Osteoarchaeology Ltd) & Rebecca Storm (University of Bradford)

Palaeoenvironmental remains – Northlight Heritage

Head of Curatorial Services - Christine McDonnell

Finds Researcher - Nicky Rogers

Medieval Pottery Researcher - Anne Jenner

Finds Officers - Geoffrey Krause & Rachel Cubitt

Archaeometallurgy & Industrial Residues – Dr. Rod Mackenzie

Conservation – Dr. Ian Panter

11 MONITORING OF ARCHAEOLOGICAL FIELDWORK

11.1 As a minimum requirement, the development control archaeologist will be given a minimum of one week's notice of work commencing on site, and will be afforded the opportunity to visit the site during and prior to completion of the on-site works so that the general stratigraphy of the site can be assessed. ArcHeritage will notify the development control archaeologist of any discoveries of archaeological significance so that site visits can be made, as necessary. Any changes to this agreed WSI will only be made following agreement with the development control archaeologist.

12 Copyright

12.1 ArcHeritage retain the copyright on this document. It has been prepared expressly for the named client.

13 KEY REFERENCES

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See also the HELM website for a full list of English Heritage Guidance documents.

<http://www.helm.org.uk/server/show/nav.19701>



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