

ARCHAEOLOGICAL OBSERVATION  
DURING GROUNDWORKS FOR NEW  
PEDESTRIAN & DISABLED ENTRANCE,  
NOELE COURT,  
TUFFREY CLOSE  
WORCESTER

WCM 101926



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Archaeological observation  
during groundworks for  
new pedestrian and disabled entrance,  
Noele Court,  
Tuffrey Close  
Worcester  
WCM 101926

23<sup>rd</sup> May 2012  
Mike Napthan MIFA

**1 Summary**

*An archaeological site visit was made at the request of the main contractors (Thomas Vale Construction Ltd) during construction of a new pedestrian entrance, with wheelchair ramp at Noele Court, a sheltered housing scheme owned by Sanctuary Housing.*

*The groundworks proved to be relatively shallow, representing the removal of an existing pathway and raised bed and the grading of the site to facilitate construction of a new straight stepped ramp and curving wheelchair ramp. The deepest point of the excavations was the trench excavated to accommodate the foundation of a flanking wall alongside the pathway.*

*In the deeper parts of the observed trench the underlying natural marl was at a depth of 550-600mm below surface level, and the overlying deposits were all of recently disturbed or redeposited topsoil. The absence of residual material (other than fragments of 19<sup>th</sup> C brick) in the soil horizons is suggestive that the development is unlikely to encounter any deposits of archaeological interest.*

**2 Introduction**

- 2.1 An archaeological monitoring visit (WCM 101926) was undertaken during groundworks associated with improvement works at the Noele Court sheltered housing complex, Tuffrey Close (off St Stephen's Terrace), Worcester (NGR SO846 568; Fig 1). The project as a whole consists of construction of a single storey extension to the north facing side elevation. Improvement of access into building through new replacement doors, external canopies and new ramped access to main entrance. New steel fencing to front and side boundaries. Removal of existing TPO trees and soft landscaping and new planting improvements. Planning permission P11E0260 was granted on 16/08/2011. The works were undertaken on behalf of Sanctuary Housing at the instruction of their contractors Thomas Vale Construction Ltd. The report was compiled at to meet the requirements of an archaeological access condition.

### **3 Methodology**

- 3.1 A single site visit was made during the groundworks for the reconstruction of the entrance way on the Ombersley Road side of the building (10<sup>th</sup> May, 2012). At the time of the visit removal of the earlier hard landscaping was largely completed and trenching for the flanking wall had been started. The exposed deposits and uprisings were observed and recorded both in a note form on a sketch plan and as digital photographs (see Photo Archive on CDROM and Figs 1-3). In the absence of any archaeologically significant deposits no detailed record was made.

### **4 Results**

- 4.1 Removal of turf and hard landscaping revealed a mixed sandy clay loam topsoil across most of the area observed (Figs 2 and 3). Some deeper interventions (up to 500mm deep) had occurred where foundations for raised beds etc had been removed, but these revealed similar topsoil deposits incorporating moderate amounts of brick rubble and occasional redundant service runs. The steeply sloping nature of the site appeared to reflect some modification of the natural topography though there is a gentle natural rise towards the east.
- 4.2 The deepest portion of trench observed was that for the foundation of the flanking wall. This trench revealed that the underlying natural marl was at a depth of 550-600mm below surface level, and the overlying deposits were all of recently disturbed or redeposited topsoil containing occasional fragments of late 19<sup>th</sup> C brick..

### **5 Discussion and Conclusions**

- 5.1 The observations proved entirely negative. The absence of residual material (other than fragments of 19<sup>th</sup> C brick) in the soil horizons is suggestive that the development is unlikely to encounter any deposits of archaeological interest. Both the Ombersley and Droitwich Roads, however are historical routeways and it would not be unexpected to encounter archaeologically significant deposits in this general vicinity; sparse evidence of prehistoric activity is also widespread across the Northwick and Perdiswell areas immediately to the north and north-east.

### **6 Acknowledgements**

The project was completed with the assistance of the following; James Dinn of Worcester City Council, Mick McCormack and Dave Cull of Thomas Vale Construction Ltd. Particular thanks are also due to the groundwork sub-contractors from Shanley Bros. Ltd

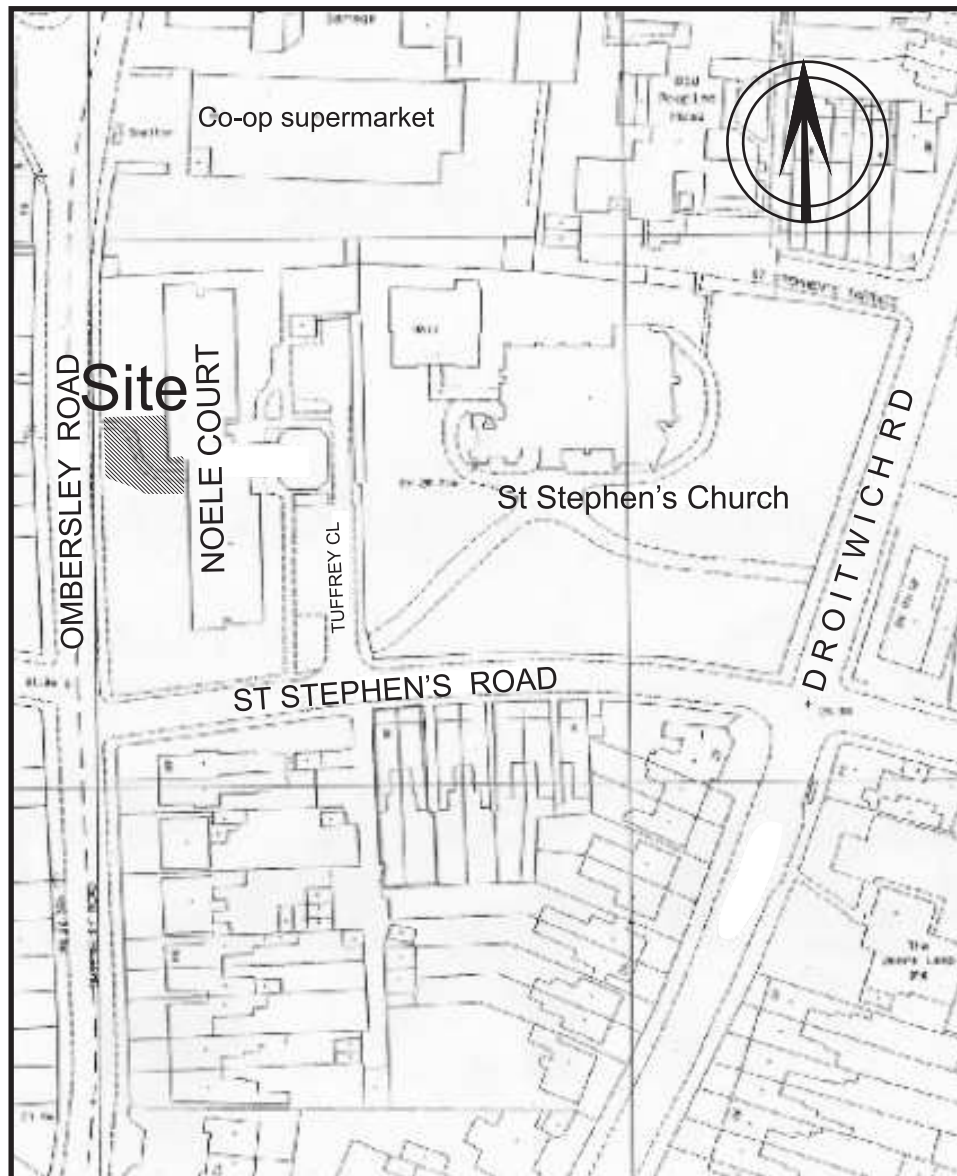


Figure 1: Location





General view of site stripping



Trench for new wall close to entrance doors showing exposure of natural red marl at a depth of 600mm

Figure 2: Site photographs





View facing south showing stripping for new disabled access ramp



Northern part of stripped area

Figure 3: Site photographs