25 STATION STREET, NOTTINGHAM

STUDENT ACCOMMODATION

Archaeological Site Investigation Report

Prepared for Morgan Sindall Construction
and Infrastructure Limited

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1.0 Introduction

Summary

This report outlines the results of an archaeological site investigation, carried out at the site of student accommodation to be constructed at No 25 Station Street, Nottingham. No previous archaeological site investigation of the development area had been undertaken, but the context and evidence from the surrounding area has been set out in a report by SLR Consulting indicated potential for it to contain evidence of past environments and potentially of human activity.

The overall aim of the site investigation was to confirm or discount the potential identified in the SLR report.

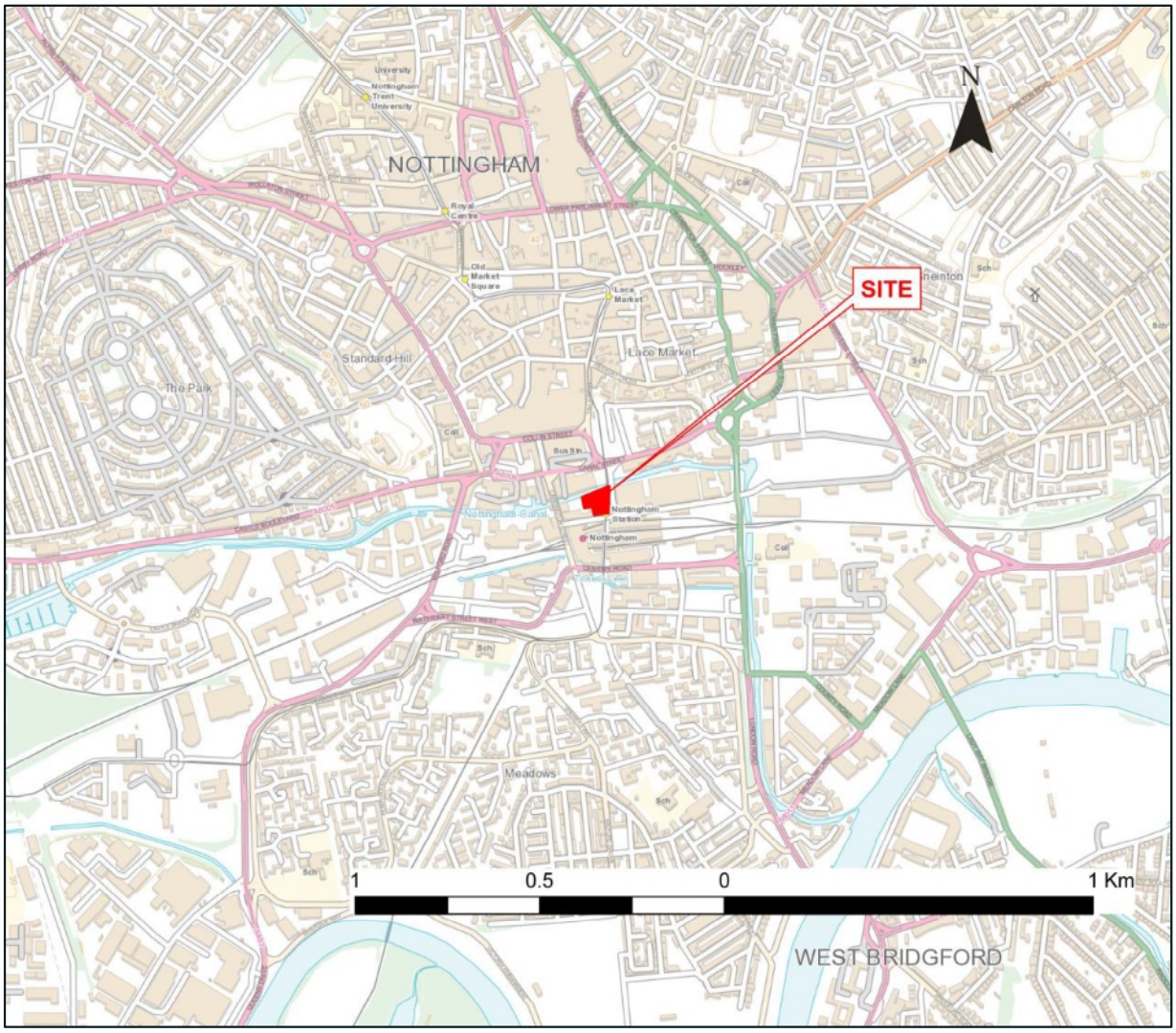
The basic deposit sequence proved to comprise modern overburden of approximately 1.0 to 1.2m thickness overlying alluvial sediments which extend to a depth of at least 2.7m below current ground surface. No archaeological features or deposits were identified with the exception of a canal infilled in the 1870s.

There are no indications that the canal or any of the deposits observed contain material that would provide useful archaeological evidence through further investigation, either due to ground conditions apparently not having preserved organic materials of palaeoenvironmental interest, or in the case of Trench 3 due to the recent nature of the material.

1.1 The Site

The Site is located at 25 Station Street, Nottingham, NG2 3AJ (Figure 1-1). It is a cleared area of land, with the office building that had previously occupied the site having been recently demolished. The site is bounded to the south by Station Street, the canal to the north and a tram viaduct to the east. To the west lies a separate property.

Figure 1-1:
Site Location



1.2 Archaeological Context

A desk-based archaeological risk appraisal[1] prepared by SLR in 2010 set out the known archaeological context of the Site including some areas to the west not now part of the development; its conclusions are summarised in the remainder of this section.

Prior to the mid-19th century the Site was in floodplain meadowlands south of the medieval and post-medieval town of Nottingham. Alluvial deposits have been reported within the Site in geotechnical studies[2]; as such deposits may preserve evidence of former environments in the form of waterlogged plant and insect remains

[1] SLR Consulting Limited, February 2010: *Station Street, Nottingham: Archaeological Risk Appraisal*
[2] GeoDyne Ltd, September 2017: *Station Street, Nottingham: Pre-Demolition Phase II Exploratory Investigation Report;* BWB Consulting Ltd, July 2018: *Vita Station Street, Nottingham, Phase 2 Geo-Environmental Assessment*

and pollen, this potential was anticipated within the Site, possibly along with archaeological features and / or structures.

From the mid-19th century, there were two main phases of site development. First was the construction of the Nottingham Canal, Station Street and Carrington Street around or close to the site perimeter, with buildings and yards developed across the site. Historic mapping indicates that a branch of the Nottingham Canal, known as the West Croft Canal was built across the western edge of the Site. No archaeological features or palaeoenvironmental deposits were considered likely to survive within the footprint of the canal.

The second main phase of development involved the filling of the canal and the raising of neighbouring street levels. Trench 3 was positioned to confirm that this feature did cross this part of the site and assess its probable impact on other areas within the Site.

1.3 Potential Impacts from Development

The geotechnical investigation of the Site information indicates that the landscaping disturbance outside the new building will be limited to the made ground layer. Within the footprint of the building, the construction groundworks will extend to depths of up to approximately 2.5m below current ground surfaces and were thus seen to have potential to remove any archaeological features or deposits and part of the underlying alluvium/organic layers which could have potential to preserve palaeoenvironmental data (evidence of past environments).

1.4 Planning

The proposed development was approved by Nottingham City Council under planning reference 18/00926/PFUL3. Draft Condition No. 9 attached to the permission required a programme of archaeological investigation to be carried out in accordance with an agreed Written Scheme of Investigation ('WSI'):

9. *Prior to the commencement of development, including the breaking of ground shall take place, unless a programme of archaeological investigation and works, for those parts of the site which are proposed to be excavated below existing ground or basement levels, has first been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The programme of archaeological investigation and works shall include:*

   a) Excavation of areas to be affected by development and the implementation of a watching brief during the course of groundworks for service installation;

   b) Preservation, in situ, of any remains which, upon archaeological investigation, are found to significantly contribute towards understanding of the historic Nottingham City Centre;

   c) Arrangements for the recording of archaeological remains and finds during the investigation and for the preparation of a final report;

   d) Arrangements for the deposition of the material and documentary archive in a registered museum;

   e) Arrangements of the publication of a summary of the final report in an appropriate journal

   The archaeological investigation and works approved under this condition shall be carried out in accordance with the approved programme.'

   The archaeological work should be undertaken by a suitably qualified and experienced archaeological contractor in accordance with the Standards and guidance of the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists and in accordance with a Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) to be approved by the City Archaeologist. The WSI should be produced in response to a brief to be issued by the City Archaeologist.

Reason: To ensure that any archaeological remains at the site are appropriately preserved and to accord with policy BE16 of the Local Plan.

The development falls within the administration of Nottingham City Council ('NCC') to whom the planning application was made. NCC's planning archaeologist is Scott Lomax.

SLR prepared the WSI[3] and the programme of investigation and works work required by the Condition. The WSI was approved by the City Archaeologist and the works, which are reported in this document were carried out in accordance with the WSI.

[3] SLR Consulting 2018: *25 Station Street Nottingham; Archaeological Evaluation: Written Scheme of Investigation*

2.0 General Arrangements

2.1 Aims and Objectives

This programme of work formed the initial archaeological investigation of the Site. It was set out to investigate whether significant palaeoenvironmental deposits and / or archaeological remains were present within the areas of the groundworks and, if so, to indicate their nature and extent.

Aims

The investigation addressed the following aims:

- identify any impact which the proposed development would have on archaeological and palaeoenvironmental remains; and
- assist with identifying any mitigation measures required.

Objectives

Trial trenches were located in order to address the following objectives:

- establish the nature of the deposit sequence on the Site; and
- contribute to establishing the extent, character, date and significance of any archaeological or palaeoenvironmental remains which may exist within the Site;

General objectives were to:

- provide an excavation archive in publicly accessible and secure permanent storage; and
- disseminate the results of the work in appropriate venue, to a level of detail proportionate to the significance and scale of the findings.

Should significant palaeoenvironmental or archaeological remains have been present (which proved not to be the case), then general research questions to be addressed through their investigation were:

- what was the nature of the natural environment?;
- what were the human impacts upon it?;
- how did the above change over time, and what were the relative contributions from natural changes and human activity?;
- was there any human exploitation of the locality and if so what was its nature?; and
- obtain sufficient information to permit the drawing-up of a detailed specification for any further investigation or mitigation required should the project proceed.

2.2 Standards

SLR is a Registered Organisation with the CIfA (Chartered Institute for Archaeologists), which is an audited status ensuring compliance with their published standards and guidance. The assessment has been compiled in accordance CIfA standards and guidance[4].

SLR operates a quality assurance system confirming to ISO 9001.

[4] Chartered Institute for Archaeologists 2014: *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Field Evaluation*

2.3 Personnel

The archaeological regulator was

Scott Lomax
City Archaeologist ('CA')
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Nottingham City Museums and Galleries
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Site work and reporting was provided by

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2.4 Monitoring

All archaeological work was monitored by the CA through telephone / email with SLR and through a site visit on 23rd October 2018.

2.5 Destination Museum

An OASIS record has been set up under reference number **slrconsu1-332263**.

This report when approved will be uploaded to the on line record.

2.6 Programme

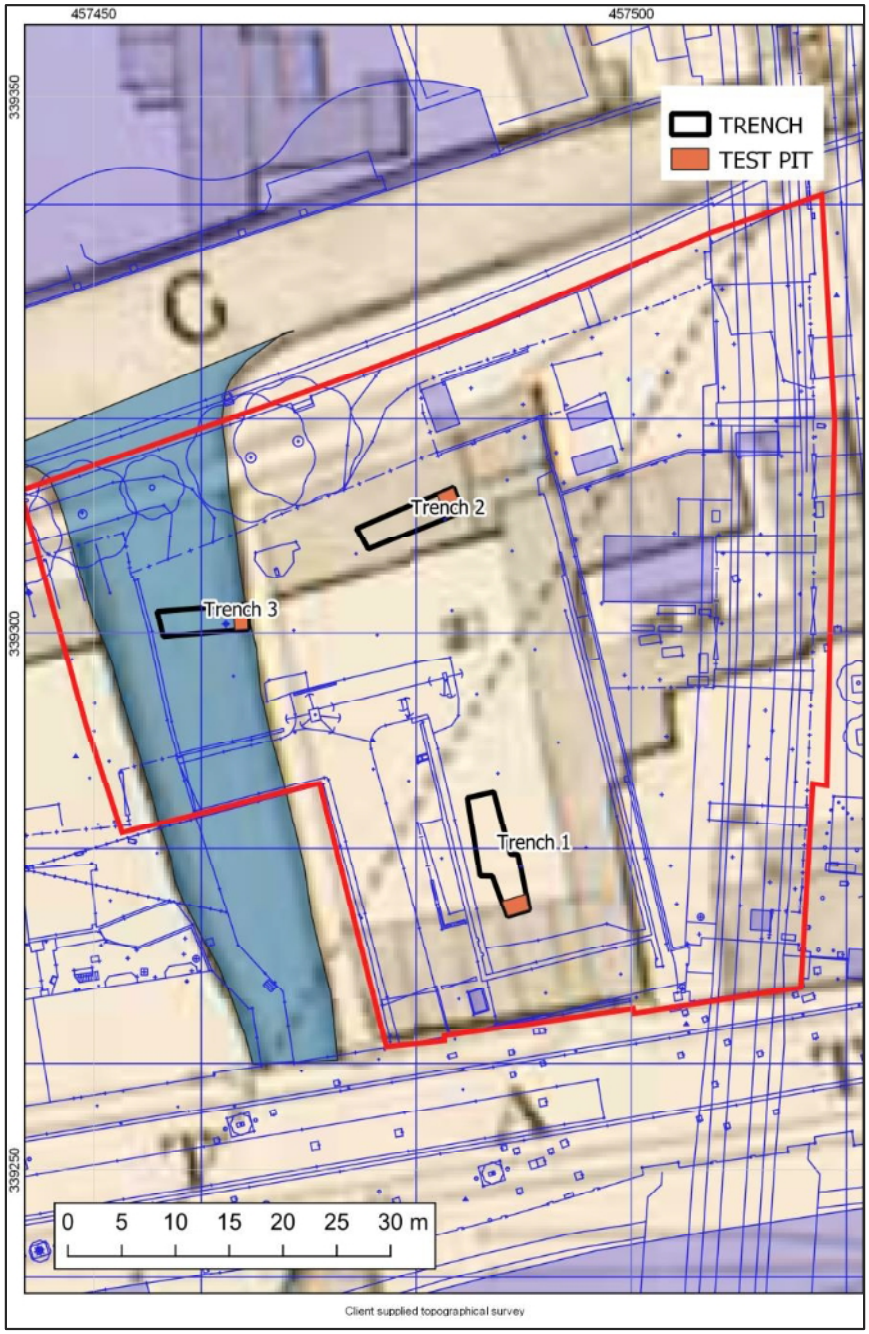
Fieldwork was carried out between Monday 22nd and Wednesday 24th October 2018.

2.7 Methodology

2.7.1 Excavation

Three trenches were excavated as shown in Figure 2-1.

Figure 2-1
Trench layout and Salmon's map of 1861



Trenches 1 and 2 were 11m long and Trench 3 was 8m long due to site constraints. The trenches were excavated to the top of the alluvium by a mechanical excavator under continuous archaeological supervision using a toothless ditching bucket where possible to a width of 1.8m.

The trial trenches were recorded by text in proformas and suitably scaled plans (in the case of Trench 1) and section drawings. Photographs were taken in colour digital format.

A test pit was then excavated in one end of the trench to a depth of approximately 2.7m to record the deeper deposit sequence and any archaeological features.. The project geoarchaeologist recorded and interpreted the exposed deposits beneath the modern made ground by inspection from the side of the pit and close inspection of the excavated soil in the machine bucket. No deposits suitable for palaeoenvironmental sampling were identified.

Artefacts recovered were limited to the 19th century and later (brick, concrete etc.) and were of no archaeological significance beyond confirming a late date for the source deposits.

3.0 Results

The context descriptions including depth below surface are set out in Table 1.

Table 1
Context descriptions

Trench	Context No	Length (m)	Width (m)	Depth below surface (m)	Description	Interpretation
1	101	Trench	Trench	0-0.3	Crushed stone / concrete	Site surface
1	102	Trench	Trench	0.3-0.8	Mixed rubble	Made ground
1	103	Trench	Trench	0.8-0.9	Dark grey brown silt loam, occasional charcoal	Buried topsoil layer
1	104	Trench	Trench	0.9-1.1	Dark grey silt	Alluvium
1	105	Pit	Pit	1.1-2.1	Red to yellow clay sand. Massive structure.	Alluvium
1	106	4.5+	2.6+	0.5	Brick foundations, three layers blue engineering bricks at base. Bricks measure 11.5cm x 7.5cm x22.5cm	Wall foundation to structure at rear of houses on Station Street
1	107	1.8+	0.8+	0.3+	Reinforced concrete	Concrete pile
1	108	2.75	0.5	0.4	Poured concrete	Concrete foundation
1	109	3.7	1.85	Unexcavated	Poured concrete	Concrete floor
1	110	Pit	Pit	2.1-2.4	Grey brown clay sand with occasional bands/pockets clay silt and sand, approximately 0.20-0.40m thick. Intraband structure massive.	Alluvium
1	111	Pit	Pit	2.4-2.6	Grey brown silt clay with abundant sand lenses/pockets, 2-3mm thick. Rare rounded clasts, 20-30mm.	Alluvium
1	112	Pit	Pit	2.6-2.75	Grey brown clay sand, very weakly developed blocky structure. Water ingress from 2.70m	Alluvium
2	201	Trench	Trench	0-0.2	Crushed stone / concrete	Site surface
2	202	Trench	Trench	0.2-0.5	Mid grey brown silt	Made ground
2	203	Trench	Trench	0.5-0.6	Brick rubble	Made ground
2	204	Trench	Trench	0.6-0.8	Black silt and rubble	Made ground
2	205	Trench	Trench	0.8-1.0	Yellow grey silt sand	Made ground
2	206	Trench	Trench	1.0-1.2	Dark brown humic silt	Buried topsoil layer
2	207	Trench	Trench	1.2-1.8	Grey brown silt	Alluvium

Trench	Context No	Length (m)	Width (m)	Depth below surface (m)	Description	Interpretation
2	208	2	2	1+	Reinforced concrete	Concrete pile
2	209	Pit	Pit	1.8-2.1	Reddish yellow brown sandy silt loam. Structure massive, but has abundant fine vertical channels, mostly iron impregnated.	Alluvium
2	210	Pit	Pit	2.1-2.8	Red brown clay sand. Massive structure. Water ingress at 2.8m.	Alluvium
3	301	Trench	Trench	0-0.3	Crushed stone / concrete	Site surface
3	302	Trench	Trench	0.3-0.9	Brick rubble	Made ground
3	303	Pit	Pit	0.9-1.0	Black silt/rubble	Made ground
3	304	Pit	Pit	0.9-1.7	Grey silty sand with frequent gravel (made ground). Water ingress at 1.2m	Made ground
3	305	Trench	Trench	1.7-2.65	Black silty organic sediment. Contains occasional mollusc shells. Fragments of brick and glazed pipe. Small fragments of brick incorporated in sand and silt lenses within sediment. Rare fragments of randomly orientated preserved plant material. Main sediment matrix has fine ripple structure. Occasional brick/post medieval ceramic	Canal fill

The full sequence of deposits exposed in the trenches and test-pits are shown in Figures 3-1 to 3-3.

Figure 3-1
Deposits in Trench 1

Figure 3-2
Deposits in Trench 2

Figure 3-3
Deposits in Trench 3

4.0 Discussion and Conclusions

4.1 Discussion

The deposit sequence in the Trench 1 test pit from Context 105 and below appears to consist entirely of natural sediments. The uppermost part of the sequence may have a weakly developed buried topsoil. No indications of archaeological features or cultural inclusions were observed in any of these sediments. The recorded textures and sedimentary structures in the form of banding and small scale widely distributed lensing are consistent with alluvial processes of deposition. Context 105 appears to be highly oxidised. None of the deposits appears to preserve organic material.

The deposit sequence in the Trench 2 test pit from Contexts 209 and 210 consists of natural deposits. The uppermost part of the sequence included a buried topsoil. No indications of archaeological features or cultural inclusions were observed in any of these sediments. The recorded textures are consistent with alluvial deposition. The relatively wide range of textural classes and generally homogenous nature of Context 209 may indicate deposition by a single relatively large flood event. Both Contexts are highly oxidised, with no indication of organic material being preserved.

Within the Trench 3 test pit, the entire excavated sequence consisted of a highly organic sediment. The proportion of organic content appears to be comparable to a mineral rich peat. The absence of all but a very small number fragments of plant material which are randomly orientated and the presence of ripple structures in the sediment indicate that the deposit is a water lain sediment rather than an autochthonous deposit, as would be expected of peat. Within the sedimentary structure of the deposit were recorded lenses of sand and silt that included small fragments of brick, indicating the recent deposition of the material. Larger fragments of brick and glazed water/sanitary pipe embedded in the deposit also indicate the relatively recent age of this deposit. Accumulations of organic rich sediments are consistent with the street conditions in towns from the medieval into the industrial period, reflecting poor sanitation and a reliance on horse-drawn transport. The location of the test pit appears to be consistent with the position of the infilled extension of the canal, which would have been a receiver for inwash from the streets.

4.2 Conclusions

The basic deposit sequence identified in the geotechnical SI within the footprint of the new building was confirmed on a larger scale in the archaeological trenches. Modern overburden of approximately 1.1m thickness overlies alluvial sediments which extend to a depth of at least 2.7m below current ground surface.

No archaeological features or deposits were identified with the exception of the canal infilled in the 1870s.

There are no indications that the canal or any of the deposits observed contain material that would provide useful evidence through further investigation, either due to ground conditions apparently not having preserved organic materials of palaeoenvironmental interest, or in the case of Trench 3 due to the demonstrably recent nature of the material.

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