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**An Archaeological Watching Brief during Geo-technical works on land at The Butts, Worcester City Centre, Worcestershire. 2003**

By

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# **An Archaeological Watching Brief during Geo-technical works on land at The Butts, Worcester City Centre, Worcestershire. 2003**

## **1.0 Summary**

*An Archaeological Watching Brief was carried out during geo-technical works on land at The Butts, Worcester City Centre, Worcestershire (NGR SO 8473 5512, Fig. 1, hereafter called the site). The archaeological monitoring was carried out in April 2003 by Birmingham University Field Archaeology Unit on behalf of Miller Homes (West Midlands) Ltd in advance of the proposed redevelopment of the site. The site lies within the historic core of the Roman and Medieval city and the monitoring took place in line with the archaeological policies in the City of Worcester Local Plan. A previous archaeological evaluation (Coates and White, 2000) recorded the survival of discrete and inter-cutting features mostly cut into the natural subsoil which were largely Roman in date (2<sup>nd</sup>-4<sup>th</sup> century). Other identified features were post-medieval in date, probably post-Civil War, with no evidence for activity in the intervening periods. The test-pitting and bore-hole survey did not identify any significant archaeological deposits, and no artefacts were recovered.*

## **2.0 Introduction**

This report describes the results of archaeological monitoring during geo-technical works on land at The Butts, Worcester City Centre, Worcestershire (NGR SO 8473 5512, Fig. 1). The archaeological monitoring was carried out in April 2003 by Birmingham University Field Archaeology Unit on behalf of Miller Homes (West Midlands) Ltd. in advance of the proposed redevelopment of the site. The archaeological monitoring was carried out in accordance the guidelines set down in *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Watching Briefs* (Institute of Field Archaeologists 1999).

## **3.0 The Site**

### **3.1 Location (Fig.1)**

The site is approximately 0.45 Ha in area and is currently an N.C.P. car park covered with a variety of hard-standing surface material. Part of the site is occupied by a mechanics' workshop and was inaccessible at the time of writing. It is located on the eastern side of the River Severn, to the northwest of Worcester city centre, centred on National Grid Reference SO 8473 5512. The boundaries to the site are formed to the north by a railway viaduct, to the east by Netherton Lane. The Butts defines the southern extent of the site, with the continuation of Netherton Lane and a council yard defining the western boundary.

## 3.2 Geology and Topography

The eastern half of the site appeared to be underlain by Second (Worcester) Terrace deposits of the River Severn and the western half by the Eldersfield Mudstone Formation of Triassic age (Joynes Pike & Associates 2000, 3.3). The site is generally flat, although the eastern side of the car park is raised by approximately one metre.

## 3.3 Geo-technical Information (Fig.2)

A series of bore-holes was excavated on the site, prior to the trial trenching, to obtain geo-technical information for the proposed development (Joynes Pike and Associates 2000). These identified a considerable variation in the depths of 'made ground' from 0.6 to 2.6m. This 'made ground' could contain archaeological deposits, the most notable depths of deposits being identified in the north (Bore-hole WS8) and in the east (Bore-holes WS1 & WS2).

## 4.0 Archaeological Background

Previous trial-trenching at The Butts (Coates and White, 2000, Fig. 2) has demonstrated the survival of discrete and intercutting features mostly cut into the natural subsoil which were largely Roman in date (2<sup>nd</sup>-4<sup>th</sup> century). Some of the features were post-medieval in date, but probably post-Civil War. There was no evidence for activity in the intervening periods. The depth of burial of the remains was variable (0.3m to 1.0m). A comprehensive interpretation of the archaeological background of Worcester's historic core has already been carried out (Coates and White, 2000) and will not be repeated here.

## 5.0 Objectives

The objectives of the archaeological monitoring were to provide a record of any archaeological deposits or features that might be present below the modern ground surface, and to recover any artefacts identified during the geo-technical works.

## 6.0 Method

The objectives were achieved through continual archaeological monitoring during the machine excavation of 5 test-pits measuring approximately 1m x 2m, and the sinking of 12 bore-holes approximately 0.1m in diameter (Fig. 3). The finished depth of the test-pits and bore-holes was deemed reached when the natural ground surface was encountered. All stratigraphic relationships were recorded on individual pro-forma record cards. A colour and monochrome photographic record was maintained, supplemented by digital images. These records form the site archive which is presently stored at Birmingham University Field Archaeology Unit.

## 7.0 Archaeological Results

### 7.1 The bore-holes

#### 7.1.1 BH01 (Plate 1)

*Sample quality* Good recovery (3.0m)

Deposit	Depth	Description	To
A	0.m	Modern surfacing/demolition/levelling layer mixed with re-deposited alluvium	1.45m
B	1.45m	Grey/brown alluvium	1.85m
C	1.85m	Red river terrace sand	2.4m
D	2.4m	Red/brown clay with grey mottling (Mudstone)	3.0m

#### 7.1.2 BH02 (Plate 2)

*Sample quality* poor recovery (3.0m)

Deposit	Depth	Description	To
A	0.m	Modern surfacing/demolition/levelling layer mixed with re-deposited alluvium	1.7m
B	1.7m	Red/brown sand and gravel	2.15m
C	2.15m	Red/brown and grey clay (Mudstone)	3.0m

#### 7.1.3 BH03 (Plate 3)

*Sample quality* poor recovery (2.0m)

Deposit	Depth	Description	To
A	0.m	Modern surfacing/demolition/levelling layer mixed with re-deposited alluvium	1.1m

B	1.1m	Red/brown and grey clay (Mudstone)	2.0m
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#### 7.1.4 BH04 (Plate 4)

*Sample quality* Good recovery (2.0m)

Deposit	Depth	Description	To
A	0.m	Modern surfacing/demolition/levelling layer mixed with re-deposited alluvium	0.5m
B	0.5	Sandy and alluvial clay	0.65m
C	0.65m	Red river terrace sand	0.85m
D	0.85m	Sandy clay and gravel	1.95m
E	1.95m	Red/brown and grey clay (Mudstone)	2.0m

#### 7.1.5 BH05 (Plate 5)

*Sample quality* poor recovery (3.0m)

Deposit	Depth	Description	To
A	0.m	Modern surfacing/demolition/levelling layer	0.3m
B	0.3m	No recovery	2.0m
C	2.0m	Red sandy clay	2.35m
D	2.35m	Red/brown and grey clay (Mudstone)	3.0m

#### 7.1.6 BH06 (Plate 6)

*Sample quality* Good recovery (3.0m)

Deposit	Depth	Description	To
A	0.m	Modern surfacing/demolition/levelling layer mixed with re-deposited alluvium	1.5m



B	1.5m	Brown sand and clay	1.8m
C	1.8m	Brown sandy clay	2.4m
D	2.4m	Red/brown clay with gravel	2.5m
E	2.5m	Red/brown and grey clay (Mudstone)	3.0m

#### 7.1.7 BH07

*Sample quality* Good recovery (3.0m)

Deposit	Depth	Description	To
A	0.m	Modern surfacing/demolition/levelling layer mixed with re-deposited alluvium	0.7m
B	0.7m	Red/brown and grey clay (Mudstone)	3.0m

#### 7.1.8 BH08

*Sample quality* Good recovery (2.0m)

Deposit	Depth	Description	To
A	0.m	Modern surfacing/demolition/levelling layer mixed with re-deposited alluvium	0.6m
B	0.6m	Red/brown and grey clay (Mudstone)	2.0m

#### 7.1.9 BH09

*Sample quality* Good recovery (3.0m)

Deposit	Depth	Description	To
A	0.m	Modern surfacing/demolition/levelling layer mixed with re-deposited alluvium	0.8m
B	0.8m	Red/brown and grey	3.0m

		clay (Mudstone)	
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#### 7.1.10 BH10

*Sample quality* Good recovery (2.0m)

Deposit	Depth	Description	To
A	0.m	Modern surfacing/demolition/levelling layer mixed with re-deposited alluvium	0.45m
B	0.45m	Red river terrace sandy gravel	0.95m
C	0.95m	Red/brown and grey clay (Mudstone)	2.0m

#### 7.1.11 BH11

*Sample quality* Good recovery (2.0m)

Deposit	Depth	Description	To
A	0.m	Concrete surface	0.2m
B	0.2m	Brick surface	0.4m
C	0.4m	Brown sandy silt	0.6m
D	0.6m	Red river terrace sandy gravel with silt	0.8m
E	0.8	Red/brown and grey clay (Mudstone)	2.0m

#### 7.1.12 BH12

*Sample quality* Good recovery (3.0m)

Deposit	Depth	Description	To
A	0.m	Modern surfacing/demolition/levelling layer mixed with re-deposited alluvium	1.1m
B	1.1m	Red/brown and grey clay (Mudstone)	3.0m

## 7.2 The test-pits

### 7.2.1 TP01 (Plate 7)

Deposit	Depth	Description	To
A	0.m	Concrete surface	0.1m
B	0.1m	Steel stantion with concrete surround	0.47m
C	0.47m	Grey clay, gravel and sand with modern demolition debris	0.8m
D	0.8m	Modern demolition debris	1.4m
E	1.4m	Brown clay, gravel and sand	1.8m

### 7.2.2 TP02 (Plate 8)

Deposit	Depth	Description	To
A	0.m	Steel stantion with concrete surround	0.7m
B	0.7m	Concrete	1.0m
C	1.0m	Dark brown slightly gravelly sand with modern demolition debris	1.2m
D	1.2m	Brown clay, gravel and sand	1.6m

### 7.2.3 TP03 (Plate 9)

Deposit	Depth	Description	To
A	0.m	Steel stantion with concrete surround	0.75m
B	0.75m	Dark brown slightly gravelly sand with modern demolition debris	1.0m
C	1.0m	Brown clay, gravel and sand	1.2m

#### 7.2.4 TP04 (Plate 10)

Deposit	Depth	Description	To
A	0.m	Steel stantion with concrete surround	1.4m
B	1.4m	Brown silty sand	1.6m

#### 7.2.5 TP05 (Plate 11)

Deposit	Depth	Description	To
A	0.m	Brick-built sump surrounded by grey-brown slightly clayey gravelly sand with modern demolition debris	1.0m

### 8.0 Discussion

The evidence from the bore-hole survey demonstrates that river terrace gravels are present at a depth of 0.4m to 2.0m below the current ground surface. Immediately beneath the river terrace deposits are the clays and mudstones of the Eldersfield Mudstone Formation recorded at depths of 0.6m to 2.55m below the current ground surface. The range of depths recorded were due to the differing height of the ground surface across the site. In one bore-hole (BH01) alluvial deposits were noted at a depth of 1.45m below the current ground surface. The test-pits were located to test the depths of obstructions such as steel stantions and brick-built structures and were therefore excavated through made-ground. The river terrace deposits and the clays and mudstones of the Eldersfield Mudstone Formation occurred at similar depths to those recorded during bore-holing. The test-pitting and bore-hole survey did not identify any significant archaeological deposits, and no artefacts were recovered.

### 9.0 Acknowledgements

The watching brief was carried out by Richard Cherrington and Mary Duncan. Richard Cherrington wrote this report. The project was managed, and this report edited by Gary Coates. The bore-hole survey and test-pitting was carried out by IGES Ltd and was directed by Mark Steward. James Dinn monitored the work on behalf of Worcester City Council. The illustrations were prepared by Nigel Dodds.

### 10.0 References

**Institute of Field Archaeologists** (1999) *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Watching Brief.*

**Coates, G.A and White, Dr. R. H. (2000): *Final Report on an Archaeological Evaluation on Land at 14-20 The Butts, Worcester.* (BUFAU report no. 741.01).**



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