

**Wolverhampton Grammar  
School, Merridale Lane,  
Wolverhampton**

**An Archaeological Watching  
Brief**

**2006**

Checked by

Supervisor..... date.....

Project Manager..... date.....

Project No.1476

Wolverhampton Grammar School, Merridale Lane, Wolverhampton  
An Archaeological Watching Brief  
2006

By

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(on behalf of)  
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*Figure 1: Location map*

*Figure 2: Foundation trench location map*

**Plates**

*Plate 1: Trench looking north*

*Plate 2: Trench looking west*

## **SUMMARY**

*In September 2006 an archaeological watching brief was carried out during groundworks prior to the construction of an arts and drama facility for Wolverhampton Grammar School. Approximately 35m of foundation trench were observed and no archaeological features or deposits were observed. The natural geology was recorded at a depth of approximately 0.70m. This was sealed by modern deposits and made ground.*

## **WOLVERHAMPTON GRAMMAR SCHOOL, MERRIDALE LANE, WOLVERHAMPTON AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF 2006.**

### **1 INTRODUCTION**

In September 2006 Birmingham Archaeology carried out an archaeological watching brief at Wolverhampton Grammar School, Merridale Lane, Wolverhampton (hereafter referred to as the site). The work was commissioned by Gould Singleton Architects on behalf of Wolverhampton Grammar School in advance of a proposed arts and drama facility (Planning Application Number 02/1322).

This report outlines the results of the watching brief, which was carried out during September 2006, and was prepared in accordance with the Institute of Field Archaeologists Standard and Guidance for an Archaeological Watching Brief (IFA 2001).

The watching brief conformed to a brief produced by Wolverhampton City Council (2006) and a Written Scheme of Investigation (Birmingham Archaeology 2006) which was approved by the Local Planning Authority in accordance with guidelines laid down in Planning Policy Guidance Note 16 (DoE 1990).

### **2 LOCATION AND GEOLOGY**

The site is located in the western suburbs of Wolverhampton and covers an approximate area of 3000 square metres. The site is bounded by Merridale Lane to the east, Merridale Avenue to the north, the Old Dairy Farmhouse to the south and modern housing to the west. The site is centred on NGR SO 9002 9845 (Fig. 1).

The underlying geology consists of boulder clay overlying sandstone. The present character of the site is a car park to the rear of buildings fronting onto Merridale Lane.

### **3 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES**

The principle aim of the project was to assess the survival and potential significance of any archaeology within the study area.

More specific aims were to:

- To locate remains of a possible moat/fishpond associated with the Old Dairy farmhouse.
- To locate any other possible medieval remains associated with the farmhouse

### **4 METHODOLOGY**

Groundworks comprised the excavation of foundation trenches with a mini-digger fitted with a toothless bucket. This was monitored by a suitably qualified archaeologist and complemented with the salvage recording of any archaeological deposits and features revealed during works.

All stratigraphic sequences were recorded, even where no archaeology was present. A comprehensive written record was maintained using a continuous numbered context system on *pro-forma* context and feature cards. Photographs supplemented written records and scale plans and sections.

The full site archive includes all artefactual remains recovered from the site. The site archive will be prepared according to guidelines set down in Appendix 3 of the Management of Archaeology Projects (English Heritage, 1991), the Guidelines for the Preparation of Excavation Archives for Long-term Storage (UKIC, 1990) and Standards in the Museum Care of Archaeological collections (Museum and Art Galleries Commission, 1992). The paper archive will be deposited with the appropriate repository subject to permission from the landowner.

## 5 ARCHAEOLOGICAL CONTEXT

An archaeological desk-based assessment already exists for the site and will not be repeated here (Hislop and Litherland 2003). To summarise:

There was an estate at Merridale documented from the 13<sup>th</sup> century, with the Old Dairy Farmhouse possibly representing the Manor House. The present building dates from the mid 15<sup>th</sup> century although it may be built over earlier structures. The Farmhouse formed part of a large farm complex. A linear water feature has been identified 100m west of the farm buildings using early cartographic evidence. This may represent the remains of a moat surrounding the farm buildings or simply a fishpond

## 6 RESULTS

The foundation trenches were excavated to a maximum depth of 0.90m and covered approximately 35m in length (Fig.2). The west of the site showed the orange-yellow silt clay natural subsoil [1003] to be sealed by a layer of mixed orange-grey clay [1002] 0.60m thick (Plates 1 & 2). This was in turn sealed by 0.10m of hardcore [1001] and tarmac [1000]. The mixed clay layer [1000] was cut by a modern brick wall [1003] in the east-west trench to the north of the site which was filled by a diesel-contaminated black deposit [1004]. The natural subsoil in the east-west orientated trench to the south of the site was overlain with a brick rubble deposit [1005], which was sealed by the hardcore and tarmac layers [1001-0].

## 7 CONCLUSIONS

The watching brief was carried out in order to discover remains of a possible moat that would have supported the theory that The Old Dairy Farmhouse was the moated medieval manor house mentioned in the documentary sources. No evidence of this moat, or indeed any medieval remains, were located within the foundation trenches.

## 8 ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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## 9 REFERENCES

Birmingham Archaeology 2006 *Written Scheme of Investigation for an archaeological watching brief at Wolverhampton Grammar School, Merridale Lane, Wolverhampton.*

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Hislop, M and Litherland, S 2003 *The Citroen Garage Site, Merridale Lane Wolverhampton: A desk-based assessment.* Birmingham Archaeology report

Wolverhampton City Council 2006 *Proposed Arts and Drama Facility for Wolverhampton Grammar School, Merridale Lane, Wolverhampton. Brief for Archaeological Work*





**Plate 1**



**Plate 2**