

birmingham archaeology

Blackroot Bistro, Sutton Park,
Sutton Coldfield, Birmingham
An Archaeological Watching Brief
September 2008

Project No. 1 1

BLACKROOT BISTRO CAFÉ, SUTTON PARK, SUTTON COLDFIELD, BIRMINGHAM

Final Report

By

Dave McNicol

For

S & S Architecture Limited

For further information please contact:

Alex Jones (Director)
Birmingham Archaeology
The University of Birmingham
Edgbaston
Birmingham B15 2TT
Tel: 0121 414 5513
Fax: 0121 414 5516
E-Mail: bham-arch@bham.ac.uk
Web Address: <http://www.barch.bham.ac.uk/bufau>

**Blackroot Bistro Café, Sutton Park, Sutton Coldfield, Birmingham:
AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF**

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SUMMARY

An archaeological watching brief was carried out by Birmingham Archaeology on land surrounding the Blackroot Bistro Café, Sutton Park, Sutton Coldfield, Birmingham (NGR SP 109 971) in September and October 2008. The fieldwork was commissioned by S & S Architecture Limited in fulfillment of a planning condition imposed by Birmingham City Council.

The natural geology was only uncovered within the south-eastern half of the site, and during the excavation of the drainage ditches. No archaeological features were identified during the watching brief.

1 INTRODUCTION

During September and October 2008, Birmingham Archaeology carried out an archaeological Watching brief at Blackroot Bistro Café, Sutton Park, Sutton Coldfield, Birmingham (hereafter referred to as the site, Fig 1). The work was commissioned by S & S Architecture Limited and took place during topsoil and subsoil stripping of the site.

This report outlines the results of the watching brief which was prepared in accordance with the Institute of Field Archaeologists Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Watching Briefs (IFA 1999).

The assessment conformed to a Written Scheme of Investigation (Birmingham Archaeology 2008) which was approved by the Local Planning Authority prior to implementation in accordance with guidelines laid down in Planning Policy Guidance Note 16 (DoE 1990).

2 LOCATION AND GEOLOGY

The site is located to the south-east of Blackroot Pool, within the eastern half of Sutton Park, which is located to the north-west off Sutton Coldfield (NGR SP 109 971). The majority of Sutton Park is classified as a scheduled ancient monument, and the development lies within the scheduled area.

The present character of the site is rough grassland and exposed surfaces used for informal outdoor seating.

3 ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Sutton Park was a medieval deer park and contains many well-preserved archaeological remains, surviving as earthworks, relating to the deer park itself and to pre- and post-medieval use of the area.

The site is close to a former quarry from which material was dug to construct the dam for Blackroot Pool, an 18th century mill pool.

4 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

The objective of the watching brief was to determine the character, extent, date, state of preservation and the potential significance of any buried remains.

5 METHODOLOGY

The topsoil was removed using a mechanical excavator, equipped with a 1.7m wide, toothless ditching bucket, working under archaeological supervision.

The stratigraphic sequence was recorded, and a photographic record of the site was taken using black and white, colour slide and digital photography. These records comprise the site archive, which will be deposited with Birmingham City Museum and Art Gallery, subject to approval from the landowner.

6 RESULTS

To the south-east of the café, the natural geology, a light reddish brown stony sand (**102**), was reached at an average depth of 0.5m below ground level. A 0.38m thick layer of greyish black silty sand subsoil (**101**) overlay the natural and was in turn overlain by a dark black clayey sand topsoil (**100**), with a maximum thickness of 0.12m. A number of tree-bowls were visible throughout the area.

The natural geology was not reached to the north-west of the café, and only the topsoil (**100**) was removed.

During the excavation of the drainage ditches around the perimeter the site, the natural geology (**102**) was uncovered, although no archaeological features were visible.

No archaeological features were uncovered during the watching brief.

7 THE FINDS

No finds of archaeological significance were recovered during the course of the watching brief.

8 DISCUSSION

No archaeological features were uncovered on the site. The tree-bowls uncovered to the south-east of the café are likely to relate to the line of trees continuing away from the café in an easterly direction. It appears that the site would have been a wooded area prior to the clearances needed for the creation of the quarry and dam at Blackroot Pool.

9 ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The project was commissioned by S & S Architecture Limited. Thanks are due Pete Edwards for his co-operation and assistance throughout the project and to Martin and Lisa from the Blackroot Bistro Cafe. Thanks also go to Mike Hodder, who monitored the project on behalf of Birmingham City Council. The watching brief was undertaken by Dave McNicol who also produced the written report. The report was illustrated by N. Dodd and H. Moulden, and edited by C. Hewitson who also monitored the project for Birmingham Archaeology.

10 REFERENCES

Birmingham Archaeology 2008 *Black Bistro, Sutton Park, Archaeological Watching Brief: Written Scheme*.

Department of the Environment (DoE) 1990 *Planning Policy Guidance Note 16: Archaeology and Planning*

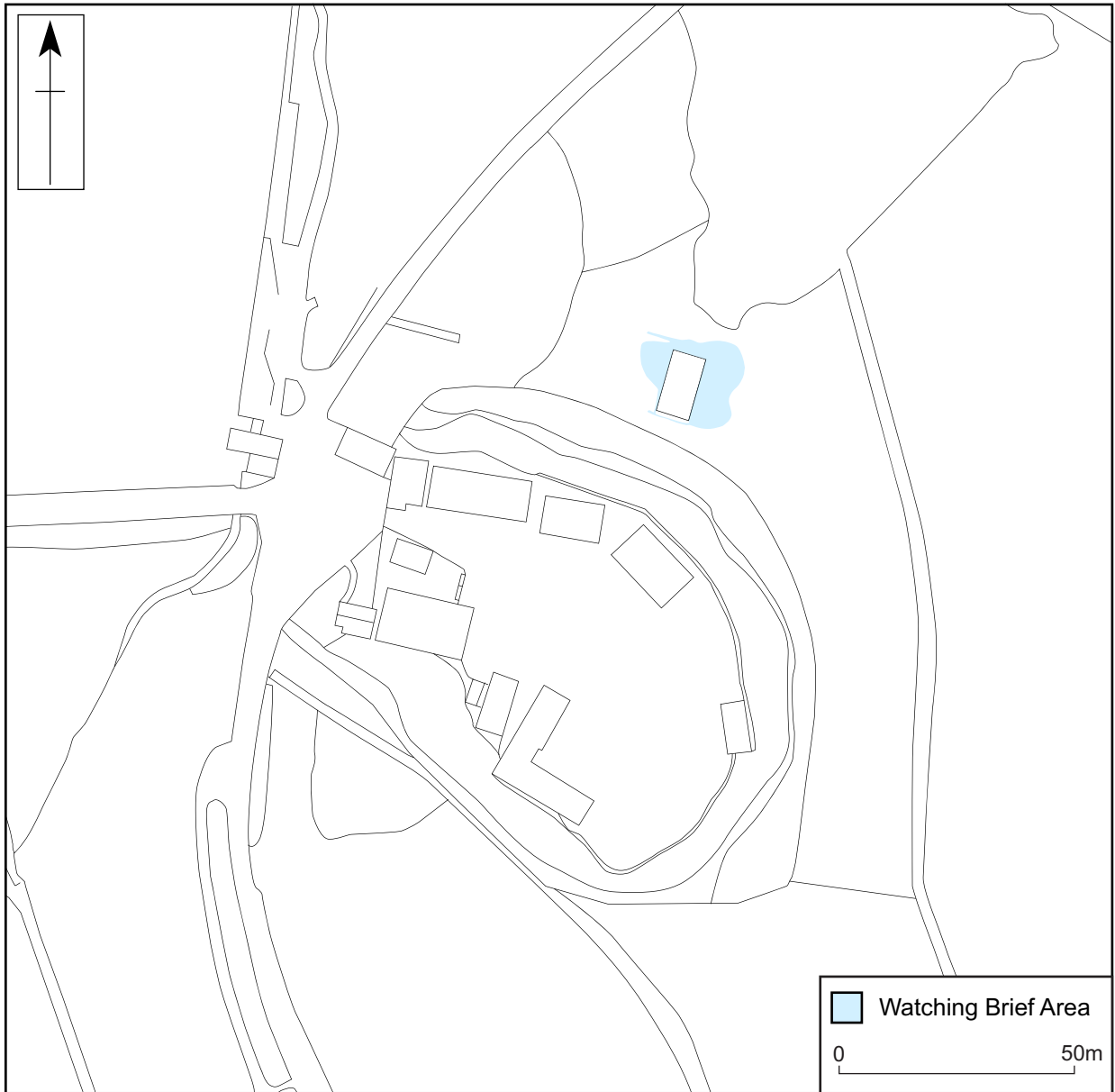
Institute of Field Archaeologists 1999 *Standards and Guidance Notes for Archaeological Watching Briefs*.



Plate 1: Stripped area to south-east of café



Plate 2: Stripped area to north-west of café





APPENDIX 1

BIRMINGHAM CITY COUNCIL DEVELOPMENT DIRECTORATE

Application number N/06573/07/FUL

Blackroot Bistro, Sutton Park (grid ref 41091 29710)

Brief for *archaeological observation and recording* during development as a condition of planning permission and scheduled monument consent

1.Summary

Development at Blackroot Bistro may expose and disturb below-ground archaeological remains. This brief is for archaeological observation and recording of any archaeological features exposed by the development.

2.Site location and description

The site lies within Sutton Park near Blackroot Pool. The bistro building is currently surrounded by rough grassland and exposed surfaces used for informal outdoor seating. Most of Sutton Park is a scheduled ancient monument, and the proposed development lies within the scheduled area

3.Planning background

Application no. N/06573/07/FUL is for construction of hardstanding to formalise outdoor seating areas. This will involve ground disturbance to create a level area on each side of the building. Planning permission and scheduled monument consent have therefore been granted on condition that archaeological observation and recording be carried out during groundworks for the development.

4.Existing archaeological information

Sutton Park was a medieval deer park and contains many well-preserved archaeological remains, surviving as earthworks, relating to the deer park itself and to pre- and post-medieval use of the area. The application site itself is close to a former quarry from which material was dug to construct the dam for Blackroot Pool, an 18th-century mill pool. The proposed development does not affect any known archaeological remains.

5.Requirements for work

The development site may contain below-ground archaeological remains which would be affected by the proposed development. In accordance with Policy 8.36 of the Council's Unitary Development Plan and the Council's Archaeology Strategy (Supplementary Planning Guidance), and government advice in Planning Policy Guidance Note 16, Archaeology and Planning, and as a condition of scheduled monument consent, archaeological observation and recording is required during development.

6.Stages of work

An appropriately skilled and qualified archaeologist is to be on site to observe all groundworks for the development, including topsoil stripping, foundation trenches, access

and services. Any archaeological features exposed are to be recorded by written description, drawing and photography. No archaeological excavation is to be undertaken other than cleaning exposed deposits for better definition. Adequate time is to be allowed for observation and recording to take place. Finds are to be retrieved as they are revealed during groundworks or cleaning. Finds are to be cleaned, marked and bagged and any remedial conservation work undertaken.

7. Staffing

The archaeological observation and recording is to be carried out in accordance with the Code of Conduct, Standards and Guidelines of the Institute of Field Archaeologists, and all staff are to be suitably qualified and experienced for their roles in the project. It is recommended that the project be under the direct supervision of a Member or Associate Member of the Institute of Field Archaeologists.

8. Written Scheme of Investigation

Potential contractors should present a Written Scheme of Investigation which details methods and staffing. The proposal should be submitted to the City Council's Planning Archaeologist before a contractor is commissioned, to ensure that it meets the requirements of this brief.

9. Monitoring

The archaeological observation and recording must be carried out to the satisfaction of Birmingham City Council, and will be monitored on his behalf by the Planning Archaeologist.

10. Reporting

The results of the archaeological observation and recording are to be presented as a written report, containing appropriate illustrations. A bound hard copy of the report and an electronic copy in pdf format must be sent to the Planning Archaeologist.

11. Archive deposition

The written, drawn and photographic records of the archaeological observation and recording, together with any finds, must be deposited with an appropriate repository within a reasonable time of completion, following consultation with the Planning Archaeologist.

12. Publication

The written report will become publicly accessible, as part of the Birmingham Sites and Monuments Record, within six months of completion. The contractor must submit a short summary report for inclusion in *West Midlands Archaeology* and appropriate period journals.

On completion of the project the contractor must complete the obligatory fields of the OASIS form and submit an electronic version of the report to OASIS (<http://ads.ahds.ac.uk/oasis>)

BIRMINGHAM CITY COUNCIL

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Planning Archaeologist: Dr Michael Hodder 0121-464 7797 fax 0121-303 3193
Mike.hodder@birmingham.gov.uk
Birmingham City Council
Development Directorate
Alpha Tower
PO Box 28
Suffolk Street Queensway
Birmingham B1 1TU

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