



Royal Grammar School Worcester

Upper Tything, Worcester

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Archaeological evaluation

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Sean Cook BA MCIfA

Illustration & contribution by Jill Atherton MCIfA

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Front cover; Priory Chapel, west end, from the south-east

SUMMARY

An archaeological evaluation was carried out during October 2009 at the Royal Grammar School Worcester, Upper Tything, Worcester as part of a proposal to demolish an existing building and to replace it with a performing arts centre on a larger footprint.

The evaluation established that the area is underlain by terrace gravels of the River Severn and was generally flat albeit with a slight slope from south to north. In both trenches this gravel is overlain by a thick deposit of a sandy soil, a layer likely to have been cultivated, its increase due mostly to a combination of composting and heavy manuring. A few fragments of Medieval pottery and tile are indication that most this activity took place during this period. In trench 1 this earlier subsoil is overlain by a sequence of alternating post-medieval layers comprising building rubble and soil and ash waste from burning. These layers may have been deposited as a rudimentary track-way and were overlain by a sandstone wall representing a former boundary to the south side of a road aligned east to west along the north side of the former 'White Ladies' Nunnery. This boundary is documented on cartographic sources in the first half of the 18th century, although more clearly defined as a wall on the OS First Edition (1886). A thick layer of garden soil was recorded to the north of this wall suggesting that the area reverted to cultivation for a short period prior to its demolition when the area was subsequently capped by a thick layer of building rubble probably during the construction of the existing school buildings when a new tarmac roadway was created providing access into Tennis Walk.

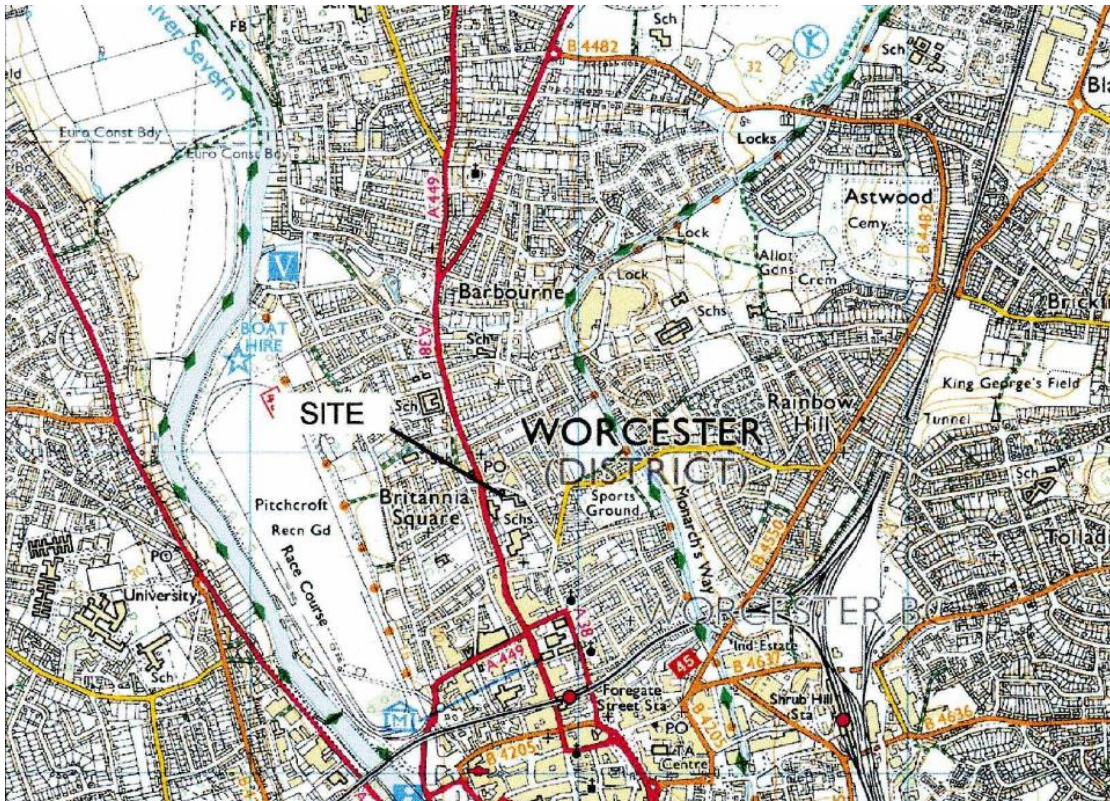


Fig.1; site location

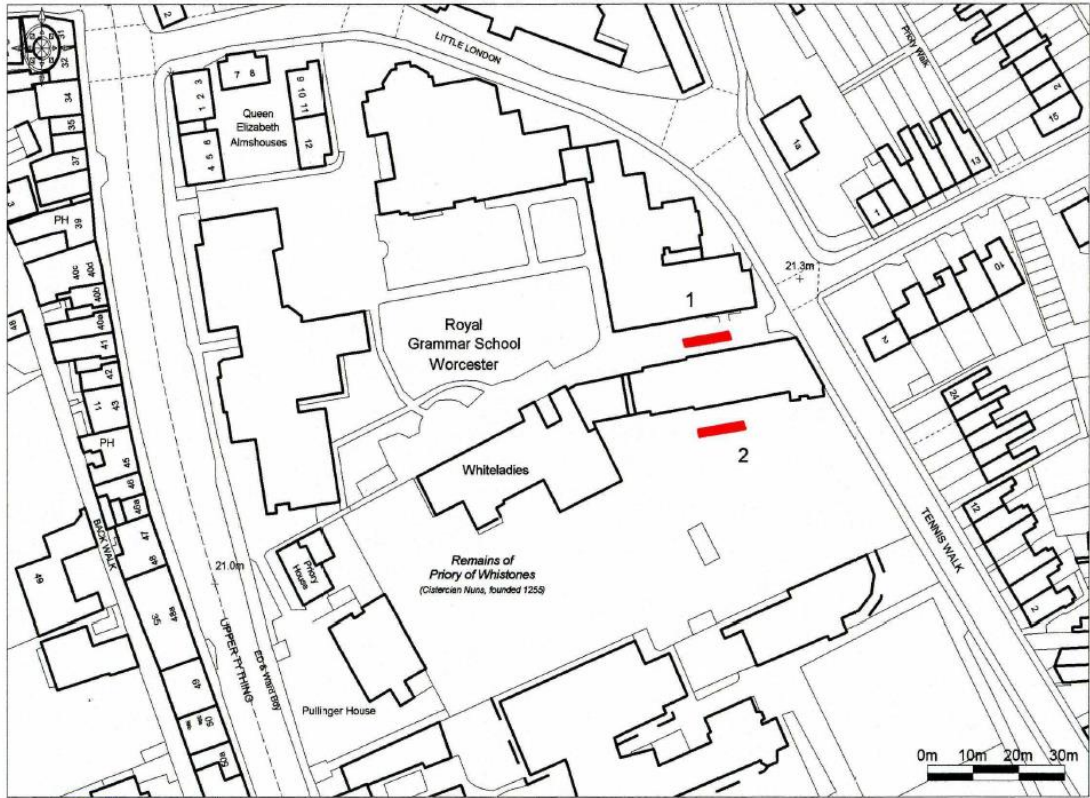


Fig. 2; study site showing trench locations

INTRODUCTION

Location and scope of work (Figs. 1 & 2)

This document details the results of an archaeological evaluation during 11th to 13th October 2009 at the Royal Grammar School, Upper Tything, Worcester, WR1 1HP carried out on behalf of Lett + Sweetland Architects and their client, the school. Worcester City Council had approved a development scheme comprising the demolition of an existing building and to replace it with a performing arts centre on a larger footprint. The existing building is partly cellared whilst within the new building it was proposed to incorporate some below ground elements.

There was the potential for significant remains of various types and periods, particularly the Medieval period and therefore planning approval was conditional on an archaeological evaluation being carried out; the results of which would to be submitted as essential information to accompany the planning application. The work was undertaken in accordance with a brief issued by Worcester City Historic Environment Service.

Following the evaluation, the planning application was withdrawn and in 2017 a new application was submitted proposing a reduced scheme. Since 2009, planning policy has been super-ceded by new guidelines incorporated in National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) introduced in 2012, and locally, in the South Worcestershire Development Plan (SWDP) which was adopted in 2016.

NPPF Chapter 12; Paragraph 128 states:

'In determining applications, local planning authorities should require an applicant to describe the significance of any heritage assets affected, including any contribution made by their setting. The level of detail should be proportionate to the assets' importance and no more than is sufficient to understand the potential impact of the proposal on their significance. As a minimum, the relevant historic environment record should have been consulted and the heritage assets assessed using appropriate expertise where necessary. Where a site on which development is proposed, includes or has the potential to include heritage assets with archaeological interest, local planning authorities should require developers to submit an appropriate desk-based assessment and, where necessary, a field evaluation.'

The SWDP ensures that development proposals conserve and enhance heritage assets, including assets of potential archaeological interest, (subject to the provisions of SWDP 24) and that their contribution to the character of the landscape or townscape is protected, to sustain the historic quality, sense of place, environmental quality and economic vibrancy of south Worcestershire.

Development proposals will be supported where they conserve and enhance the significance of heritage assets, including their setting. This applies to:

- iii. Designed landscapes, including parkland, gardens, cemeteries, churchyards, public parks, urban open spaces and industrial, military or institutional landscapes.
- iv. Archaeological remains of all periods.
- v. Historic transportation networks and infrastructure including roads and trackways, canals, river navigations, railways and their associated industries.
- vi. The historic core of the cathedral city of Worcester, with its complex heritage of street and plot patterns, buildings, open spaces and archaeological remains, along with their settings and views of the city.
- vii. The civic, religious and market cores of south Worcestershire's city, town and village fabric with their wide variety of building styles, materials and street and plot patterns.

This document represents a revision of the previous report (Cook, 2009) which has been updated to meet current guidelines outlined in NPPF and the SWDP. Although a full historic desk based assessment was not required in this instance, as a minimum, the Historic Environment Record was consulted to ensure that the revised report was commensurate with current knowledge. In general, the results of the evaluation would be used to determine the likely nature, extent, preservation and importance of any archaeological remains, and how these may be affected. The information would enable the City Archaeological Officer to advise the planning authority of the impact of the development on the heritage asset. Should the application be approved the results would form the basis of an appropriate mitigation strategy. The specific aims and objectives of the evaluation in 2009 are outlined in the methodology.

Geology and topography

The site is located on the east side of Upper Tything, Worcester, about 1 km north of the historic city centre lying at approximately 21m Above Ordnance Datum (AOD). It is currently occupied by a building, part of the Royal Grammar School complex, with adjacent hard-standings to either side. Preliminary investigations carried out during the compilation of the WSI showed that the underlying geology of the site comprises a Terrace deposit of the 2nd (Worcester) of the River Severn (BGS, 1993). This was confirmed during excavation in both trenches.

Archaeological and historical background

A total of 102 monument records and 43 event records are identified from the Historic Environment Record (HER) within the 250m search area centred on the site. A summary of the significant information is outlined below.

Prehistoric

There is currently no evidence within the search area for prehistoric deposits. Possible Iron Age deposits have been recently recorded further north during excavation at the former Worcester Football Club (Bray, 2016).

Roman

WSM07300; Romano-British coins, White Ladies, Upper Tything, Worcester.

WCM 101137; an archaeological evaluation was undertaken at Alice Ottley School revealing the remnants of a possible Roman soil horizon as well as layers of dumped material cut by two pits dating to the post-medieval period. The results showed that the area had perhaps always been used for agricultural and as gardens (Goad and Darch, 2003).

Evidence of Roman activity is recorded within the vicinity of the site in Britannia Square and Landsdowne Road. In 2014 excavation at the former Worcester City Football Club revealed a dense cluster of multi-period archaeological deposits from (probably) the Iron Age, Roman, medieval and post-medieval periods (Bray, 2016).

Saxon/early medieval

WCM96061; a stone cross, 'of Saxon origin, and probably sepulchral' 'called the White Stane' once stood somewhere on the site of the Priory of Whistones (WCM 96059) and gave its name to the manor of Whistones. May possibly have been a medieval (?12th-century) cross that stood in the vicinity to mark the end of the bishops' planned suburb.

Medieval

WCM96059; Whistones Priory medieval Cistercian nunnery, was in existence by 1240-1 when Henry III sent gifts to the White Sisters of Worcester. This suggests that the foundation may have pre-dated the election of Bishop Walter de Cantilupe in 1237, traditionally regarded as the founder.

No archaeological fieldwork is known to have taken place within the proposed building footprint. The proposed development is within an area that historically formed part of the Priory of Whistones, a house of Cistercian nuns. The nunnery of the White Ladies of Aston, otherwise known as the house of St. Mary Magdalene, at Whistones, stood on the north side of the cemetery of the hospital of St. Oswald. It was founded before 1255, in which year the site was confirmed to the nuns by the prior and convent of Worcester (VCH, 1971).

WCM 100481; Mention by Edwin Lees of the exhumation 'many times' of skeletons from the nunnery cemetery on the north side of Whiteladies House. Specifically, 'three skeletons were uncovered (Lees, 1867).

WCM96060; Nunnery chapel, White Ladies (Whistones). Medieval nunnery chapel, part of the Priory of Whistones (WCM 96059). The architectural details, and those of the church, suggest a 13th-century date.

WCM96012; St Oswald's Hospital. Medieval hospital and post-medieval alms houses. The earliest reference to St Oswald's, in the Mappa Mundi dating from c 1200. Although traditionally founded by St Oswald himself, it is most likely to have been a typical suburban hospital founded in the 12th century.

WCM100612; demonstrates the presence of burials in the north-east corner of the site. In 1930 the cemetery was said to have been much larger in former years than it was then.

WCM96065; Whistones Tithe Barn. Medieval or post-medieval tithe barn of Claines parish, demolished in 1878 when the present almshouses were built. It stood on and along the street frontage according to Young's 1770 and Doharty's 1741 map.

WCM96068; St Oswald's Hospital, medieval ranges

Evaluation and a small-scale excavation in the early 1990s (WCM 100390, 100391) on the south side of the present St Oswald's Hospital precinct (WCM 96012) showed that the medieval ranges were aligned differently to the present (1871-3) ranges, and the preceding ranges as mapped in the 18th century (WCM 96062, 96063). A substantial late medieval masonry building was found, aligned NNW - SSE, with a clay floor beneath a robbed tile floor. The function of the building is not known. Earlier (Romanesque to mid-13th-C) architectural material was recovered from the fabric of the walls.

WCM96574; Whistones Priory: cemetery north of chapel?

WCM96575; Whistones Priory: medieval fishpond

WCM100479; During building work on WRGS in 1959 six skeletons were found when the old Preparatory School classroom was demolished. A Coroner's Inquest determined that they were burials from the nunnery cemetery. Excavations were undertaken by Henry Sandon, who found 'squares of fifteenth century wall tiles' 'associated' with the burials. It was determined from this that the burials had been re-interred as found, at a date not earlier than the 15th century. The bones were re-interred nearby under the SE corner of Hillard Hall.

WCM101056; an archaeological evaluation at the rear of 35 The Tything, Worcester.

The earliest deposits exposed proved to consist of a sequence of stratified fills of a large feature of Roman or Medieval date (Napthan, 2003).

WCM101424; archaeological evaluation on land to the rear of 27 The Tything.

The results demonstrated that there was activity on the site from at least the 13th century, although a ditch feature identified on the western side of the site, running north to south parallel with The Tything, is likely to be the western boundary ditch of the medieval Foregate Street suburb of Worcester, which was probably laid out in the 12th Century. There were no finds from the ditch, but

previous work at 35 and 39 The Tything, further to the south, had identified a ditch feature on the same alignment, which contained pottery dating from the 14th century, indicating that by this time the ditch was not being maintained and that it is likely the feature had become redundant as a boundary marker (Williams, 2006).

Post-medieval

WCM98012; Goulding's Hospital

WCM99018; Whiteladies House at Worcester Royal Grammar School. c1720 with later additions and alterations; also, incorporates the remains of the C13 chapel of the Cistercian Nunnery of Whiteladies which formerly occupied the site.

WCM99930; several human skeletons were found, probably the remains of persons killed at the Battle of Worcester, in 1651".

During building work on the Royal Grammar School in 1959 six skeletons were found when the old Preparatory School classroom was demolished. A Coroner's Inquest determined that they were burials from the nunnery cemetery. Excavations were undertaken by Henry Sandon, who found 'squares of fifteenth century wall tiles' 'associated' with the burials. It was determined from this that the burials had been re-interred as found, at a date not earlier than the 15th century. The bones were re-interred nearby under the south-east corner of Hillard Hall (Wheeler, 1990).

According to Allies: 'Upon a drain being made at The White Ladies, in 1842, across the lawn in front of the house, several Roman and Greek coins are said to have been found' (WCM 100480). Following a list of them, Allies relates that he saw the trench open and was told that this was indeed their source. Mrs Thomas, the finder, later claimed that some had been found as well near Cruckbarrow Hill by her father. Numismatists of Allies' acquaintance doubted the authenticity of the discovery. According to Willis-Bund, both the Greek and the Roman coins were 'purposely buried by a lady who afterwards admitted the act' (Allies, 1852).

When the British Archaeological Association came to Worcester in August 1848 the owner of White Ladies, Mrs Thomas, consented to an excavation taking place to test the theory that a subterranean passage led between there and the cathedral, and Hindlip House (WCM 100809). 'Accordingly, several labourers were set to work with bar, pick-axe, and shovel'. Their attention was directed to a blocked arch at the south corner of the west wall of the chapel crypt (WCM

96060) which was remembered by elderly locals as the place where Nash had entered the tunnel. The arch was 'soon cleared out, and penetrated into the soil beyond, but found nothing like a continuation of masonry on either side to warrant them in persevering in that direction. They also dug a trench under the site of the south wall of the chapel, and in other portions of the garden, with the hope of intersecting the passage at some point or other, but with no better success'. During the explorations, several relics of the past were discovered; such as coins, a stone coffin, and several skeletons (Dunkin, 1851).

WCM101213; archaeological evaluation at Alice Ottley School, Upper Tything.

No features, horizons or structures pre-dating the post-medieval period were identified within the two evaluation trenches. A single residual Roman sherd and a medieval roof-tile were recovered in association with post-medieval and modern material. Dump deposits containing building debris lay directly over the natural matrix of river terrace sand and gravel, indicating that earlier horizons had been scoured off prior to their deposition, probably associated with construction and development of the site from the mid-18th century. An east, north east/west, south west ditch was recorded, on the south-east side of the site and may represent the southern boundary of the medieval White Ladies Priory which lay to the north. (Vaughan, Crawford and Pearson, 2004).

WCM101251; archaeological evaluation was undertaken at the rear of 31 The Tything.

The earliest deposits proved to consist of a greenish grey sandy loam layer, possibly a cultivated soil containing moderately frequent fragments of 13th - 15th century pottery and occasional residual Roman material. The bulk of the excavated deposits however consisted of the fills of one large, apparently linear feature of early post medieval date (Napthan, 2004).

WCM101765; archaeological evaluation at Royal Grammar School Worcester, Upper Tything.

The evaluation recorded in both trenches cultivated soil producing a few fragments of medieval pottery overlain by a sequence of alternating post-medieval layers which were in turn overlain by a sandstone wall representing a former boundary to the south side of a road aligned east to west along the north side of the former White Ladies Nunnery (Cook, 2009).

WCM96012; St Oswald's Hospital

Medieval hospital and post-medieval alms houses. The earliest reference to St Oswald's, in the Mappa Mundi compiled by Gervase of Canterbury, dates from c 1200; the next reference is not until 1264 when the hospital sought and received a grant of the king's protection. Although traditionally founded by St Oswald himself, it is most likely to have been a typical suburban hospital founded in the 12th century.

UNDATED

WCM100391; St Oswald's Hospital - watching brief

Salvage recording was undertaken during the groundworks phase of the alms-house extension that had previously been evaluated (WCM 100390). Natural sand was found as per the evaluation at 21.29m AOD. Quantities of human bone were recovered from the trenches and machining disturbed several articulated burials (partially recorded). Bone was collected for reburial within the groundworks. The sandstone ashlar wall foundation seen in the evaluation was encountered again, in association with other walls forming the north, south and east sides of a rectangular structure. Three reused architectural fragments had been incorporated in the walls, one of Norman or Saxo-Norman date. Further decorated floor tiles and glazed roof tiles were found unstratified but may have been associated with this building (Edwards, 1992).

EXCAVATION METHODOLOGY

Aims of the work

The objective of the trial trenching in 2009 was to:

- i) clarify the presence/absence, location and extent of archaeological deposits on the site;
- ii) identify, within the constraints of the evaluation, the date, character, condition, depth, significance and quality of any surviving remains within the site.
- iii) assess the degree of existing impacts to sub-surface horizons and to document the extent of archaeological survival of buried deposits.
- iv) investigate some specific research questions relating to Holocene terraces and alluvium; the hinterland of Roman Worcester; the Roman road network and rural sites in the Worcester hinterland.

Sample size and scope of fieldwork

The evaluation comprised two linear trenches each measuring 10m long and 1.60m wide. Both trenches were excavated by machine using a toothless bucket. Trench 1, was in a tarmac driveway between the existing music and performing arts centre buildings whilst trench 2 was positioned to the south between the existing performing arts centre and the existing tennis courts.

Fieldwork methods and recording

The archaeological field work and post-excavation was carried out in 2009 in accordance with standards and guidance for archaeological field evaluations (IfA, 1999) now super-ceded (CIfA, 2014). All deposits were excavated removing the overburden under close archaeological supervision and investigated for archaeological features. A plans and sample sections of the trenches were made and recorded during excavation.

RESULTS: GENERAL

Soil and ground conditions

Conditions were generally dry during excavation, the deposits showing some moisture retention. Excavation was relatively smooth being made through alternate layers of topsoil and underlying subsoil leaving a clean and visible surface on the natural substrate. Conditions were generally dry during fieldwork with the deposits showing little or no water retention.

Reliability of field investigation

Trench one showed substantial truncation. The relationship between the deposits within the north and south side of the trench was disturbed, resulting from a deep modern trench excavated along the centre of the evaluation trench. There was also a modern pit (109) partially exposed within the centre of the trench. Some disturbance also occurred from the excavation of services in the west end of the trench although the depth of this disturbance was not as great.

Distribution of archaeological deposits

Archaeological deposits comprised in both trenches a thick deposit of cultivation soil overlain in trench 1 by a sequence of alternating post-medieval layers and sandstone wall representing a former boundary to the south side of a road aligned east to west along the north side of the former White Ladies Nunnery.

Presentation of results

The results of the excavation (below) are described from the earliest to the latest deposits. The trench was attributed context numbers with a numerical value equivalent to the number of the trench.

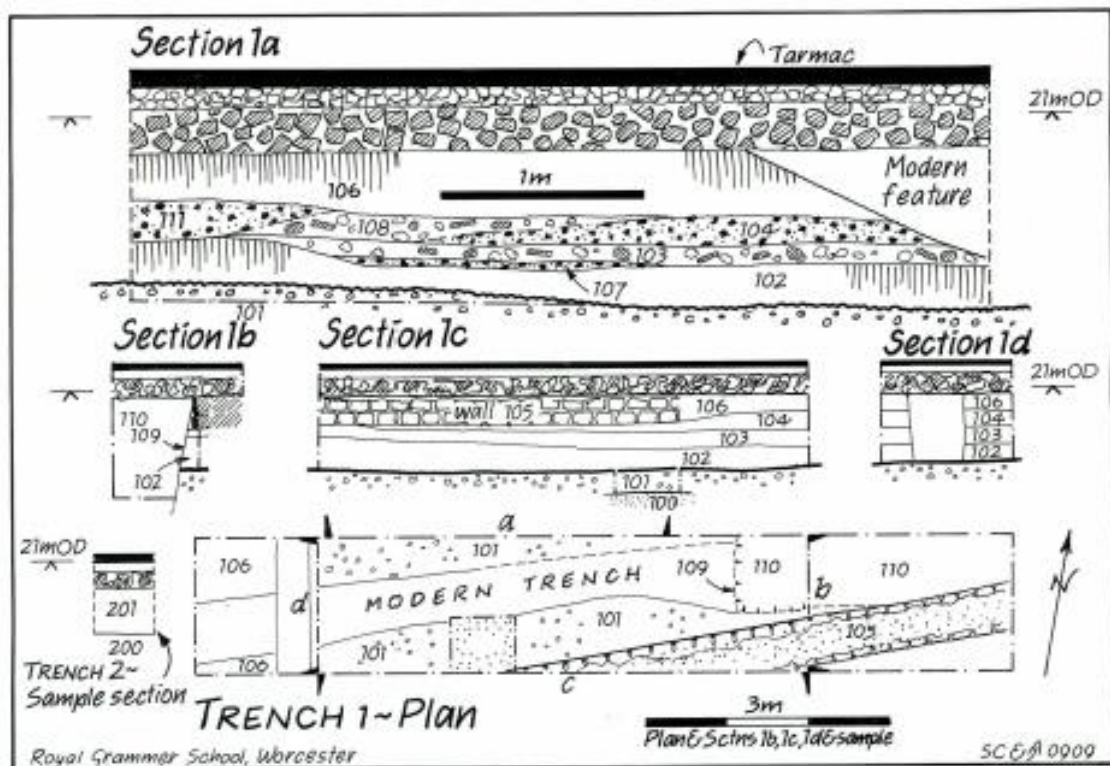


Figure 3; trenches 1 & 2, plans & sections

RESULTS: DESCRIPTIONS (Fig. 3)

TRENCH 1

Natural substrate (Layers 100 and 101)

The natural substrate comprised an orangey-sand (100) overlain by a layer of gravel (101). The surface of the sand layer was exposed within a small hand excavated sondage at a height of about 19.70m Above Ordnance Datum (AOD). This was overlain by the gravel layer 101 to a depth of about 0.30m. Both the sand and the gravel layers represent a sequence of natural deposits associated with post-glacial deposition, the gravel marking the latest deposit within this sequence. The surface of this deposit was exposed throughout the central area of the excavated trench.

Layer 102

Overlying the exposed natural gravel layer was the deposit 102, comprising a thick homogenous layer up to about 0.40m thick of greyish-brown sandy-silt. The layer contained a small inclusion of pebbles and charcoal flecking and produced a single small fragment of Medieval flat roof tile and a few fragments of animal bone. The deposit, representing the earliest soil horizon was interpreted as a former cultivation layer.

Layer 107

Overlying 102, but observed in only the north side of the trench was the layer 107 comprising a burnt thin deposit up to 0.04m thick, consisting of a sandy-silt with a large component of ash, clinker and some slag.

Layer 103

Overlying the deposit 102 throughout the excavated trench was the layer 103 comprising a light greyish-brown sandy-silt up to about 0.20m thick. Forming a large component of the layer were numerous fragments of red brick, stone and ceramic roof tile. The layer was interpreted as re-deposited post-Medieval building debris.

Layer 104

Sealing the layer 103 throughout the excavated trench was the layer 104 comprising a greyish-black sandy silt with a large component of ash, clinker and

some slag. The layer was up to 0.20m thick and appeared to represent a re-deposited burnt material possibly resulting from some form of industrial activity carried out nearby.

Layer 108

Overlying the layer 104 in the north side of the trench was the deposit 108 similar in make-up to the layer 103 comprising a large amount of building debris within a sandy-silt matrix and up to 0.12m thick.

Layer 111

Overlying the layer 108 in the north side of the trench was the deposit 111 comprising the same material as that recorded within the layers 107 and 104 and up to 0.20m thick.

Wall 105

Overlying layers 103 and 104 was the remains of wall 105. The wall measured about 0.50m wide and almost 0.40m deep with only two courses remaining in situ. The wall was constructed predominantly from red sandstone although there were a few pieces of green sandstone. The stones were mostly of the same size, comprising roughly regular square sized blocks and were bonded with a lime based mortar. The wall was generally aligned east to west, both ends continuing beyond the edge of the excavated trench. The wall was interpreted as a former boundary wall and is clearly visible on the OS First Edition (1886) and again, although less clearly on an earlier plan by J. Doherty compiled in 1741.

Layer 106

Abutting the exposed north face of wall 105 and continuing north beyond the edge of the trench was the layer 106, comprising a greyish-brown sandy-silt up to 0.35m thick. Within the deposit was a small inclusion of charcoal flecking, small pebbles and fragments of red brick and tile like that recorded within the layer 103. The layer was interpreted as a former garden soil to the north of wall 105 presumably cultivated when the wall (105) was intact and still acted as a boundary.

Pit 109 and fill 110

Cut into layer 106 towards the east end of the trench and the modern trench running down the centre of the trench was the modern pit 109. Like the modern trench, this pit continued beyond the bottom of the evaluation trench. Sealing

wall 105 and the layer 106 was a thick deposit of modern building rubble up to 0.25m thick. The layer represents ground build-up and is probably associated with the construction of the existing adjacent school buildings. Sealing this layer is the existing stone and tarmac layer marking a driveway from an entrance to the school of Tennis Walk.

TRENCH 2

Natural substrate (200)

In Trench 2, excavated on the south side of the existing performing arts centre the surface of the natural gravel was encountered throughout the trench at a level height of about 20.20m AOD. This layer was equivalent to the layer 101 in Trench 1 and represents a continuation of the terrace gravel to the south.

Layer 201

Overlying the natural gravel was the layer 201 comprising a light greyish-brown sandy-silt also with some charcoal flecking and equivalent to the layer 102 in Trench 1 although in Trench 2 this layer was significantly thicker at 0.55m deep. Finds comprised two small fragments of Medieval roof tile like that recovered from 102 and three fragments of Medieval pottery. A few fragments of animal bone were also recovered.

Layer 202

Sealing layer 201 throughout the trench to a depth of 0.25m was the layer 202, consisting of a greyish black sandy-silt with a small pebble inclusion and the occasional; brick fragment. The layer was interpreted as a post-Medieval garden soil. The layer was in turn sealed by the existing modern stone and tarmac.

FINDS

Ceramic assemblage by Jane Timby

The archaeological work resulted in the recovery of three small sherds of pottery and four fragments of ceramic building material. The assemblage was recovered from contexts (102), (103) and (201) and is briefly catalogued below. The pieces from the cultivation soil (102, 201) were quite small and degraded but are likely to be of medieval date. The pottery and tile appear to share a similar fabric suggesting all are of local origin. The tile from context (103) is likely to be of post-medieval date. Although nib tiles are known from the 13th century they

continued to be made into the 18th-19th centuries. The finer character of the fabric used in this piece suggests it is a later example.

- 1 Context (103) building rubble. Four roof tile fragments one with a small pulled nib with finger streaking. Sanded on the underside from the mould. Probably handmade. Wt. 884g. Date: Post-medieval.
Two fragments of red brick. Wt. 457g.
- 2 Context (102) cultivation soil. One small fragment of flat roof tile. Wt. 12g. Date: Medieval.
- 3 Context (201) cultivation soil. Two small fragments of flat roof tile like above. Wt. 28g.
- 4 Context (201). Three degraded fragments of pottery. Red-brown oxidised with a grey inner core. Probably Worcester-type sandy unglazed ware (Worcester type fabric 55). Wt. 14g. Date: late 11th-mid 14th century. Oxidised fabrics tend to be at the later part of the range.

Environmental data

Palaeo-environmental evidence

None of the deposits exposed during the excavation proved suitable for palaeo-environmental sampling.



Plate 1; trench 1, view from the west



Plate 2; trench 1, from the south-east



Plate 3; trench 1, section detail, from the south-east



Plate 4; trench 2, from the south-east



Plate 5; trench 2, section detail

DISCUSSION (Figs. 4 & 5)

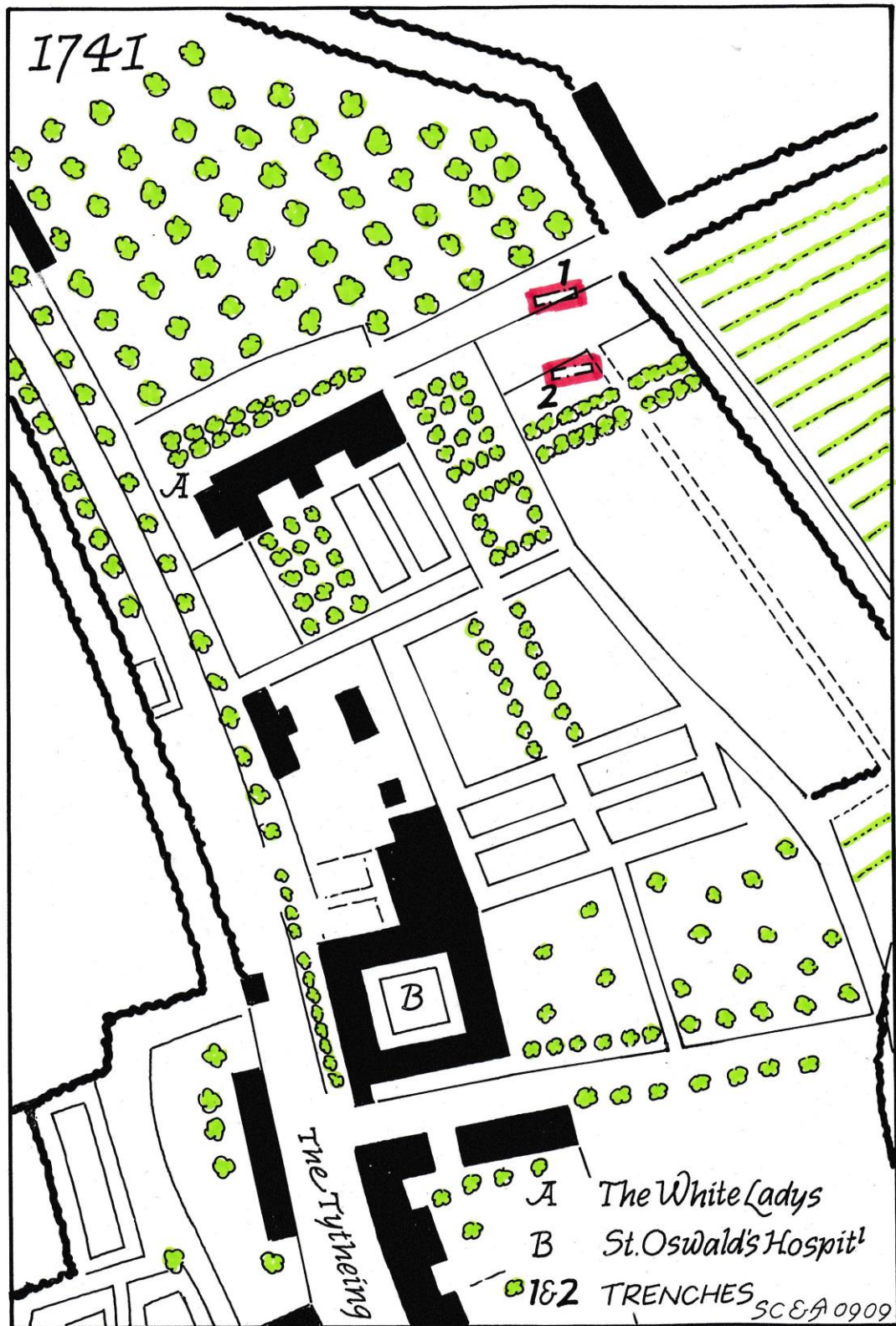


Fig. 4; trench locations based on 1741 plan

The natural substrate (contexts 101 and 200), comprising a post-glacial terrace gravel of the River Severn was exposed within both evaluation trenches. In trench 1 the surface of this layer lay at about 19.40 m AOD (1.30 m below the existing ground level) and in trench 2 at about 20.20 m AOD (0.90 m below the existing ground level). This would suggest that the surface of the gravel slopes down from south to north with a fall of about 0.80 m between the two trenches. Subsequent ground build-up during more recent times within the area of trench 1 has resulted in a level surface between the two trenches. No archaeological deposits were observed in association with this gravel layer.

In both trenches the gravel was overlain by a relict subsoil comprising layers 102 trench 1 and 201 in trench 2 each producing a few fragments of Medieval tile and pottery. In trench 1 this layer was about 0.40 m thick throughout the trench and in the second trench about 0.50 m in depth. The layer represents the earliest soil horizon and its significant thickness is likely of have resulted combination of natural composting and probable heavy manuring during the medieval period when the land is likely to have been cultivated during occupation of the Cistercian priory. The priory is documented as in existence from before the mid-13th century and occupied until to the early part of the 16th century.

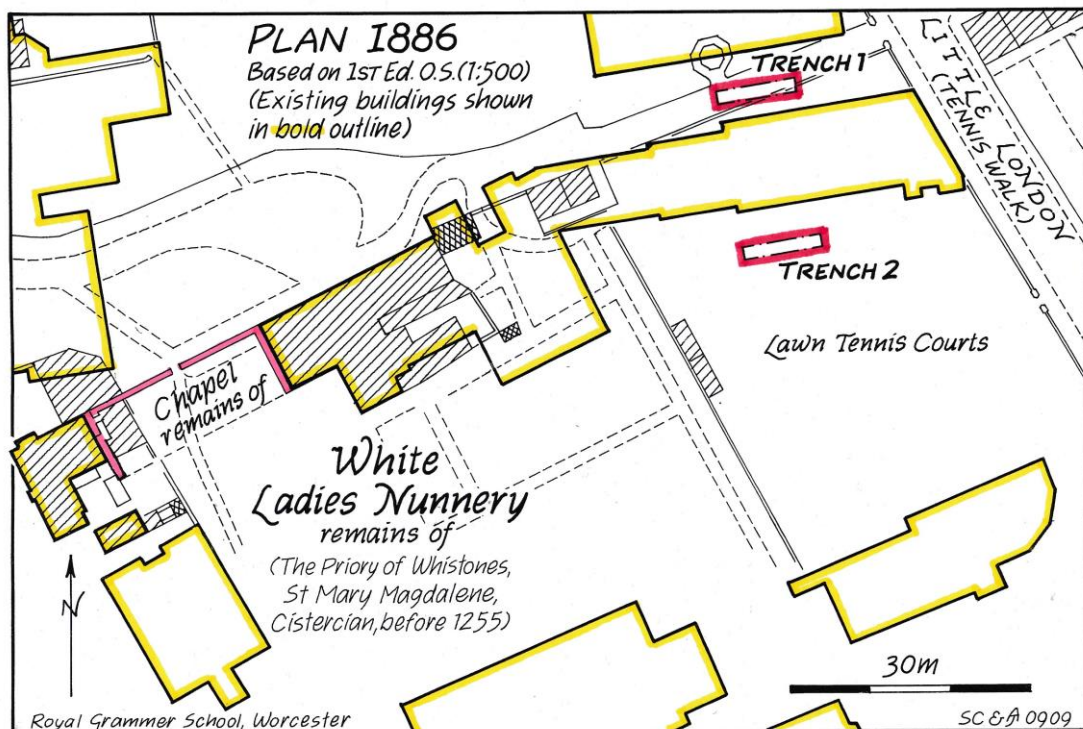


Fig. 5; trench locations based on 1886 plan

The deposits overlying the medieval subsoil layers 102 and 201 were different within the respective trenches. In trench 1 there were essentially two layers consisting of initially a small lens of a greyish-black burnt soil (107), ash and clinker/slag, overlain a layer of sandy-silt (103) with a large component of building rubble comprising post-medieval ceramic roof tile and red brick fragments. This was in turn overlain by a further thin layer (103) of greyish-black burnt deposit like the layer 107.

Wall 105 overlies the post-Medieval layers 103 and 104 and is documented on the 1886 OS First Edition as a boundary between the north side of the old tennis courts as they were then with a former access road on the other side from the school into Tennis Walk or formerly 'London Road'. The existing music building and arts centre (proposed for demolition) did not exist when this road was in use. This access road is also visible on the 1741 plan and although the boundary is also present, it is not as clearly defined as it is in the 1886 map. The 1741 plan shows that land to the south of a boundary on the same alignment as wall 105 was landscaped and used as probable gardens. Wall 105 may be comprised of re-used from the former priory building.

Summary of results

The evaluation established that the area is underlain by terrace gravels of the River Severn and was generally flat. In both trenches this gravel is overlain by a thick deposit of a probable cultivation soil. A few fragments of medieval pottery and tile are an indication that most this activity took place during this period. In trench 1 this earlier subsoil is overlain by a sequence of alternating post-medieval layers that may have been deposited as a rudimentary trackway and these were overlain by a sandstone wall representing a former boundary to the south side of a road aligned east to west along the north side of the former White Ladies Nunnery. This boundary is documented on cartographic sources in the first half of the 18th century, although more clearly defined as a wall on the OS First edition (1886). A thick layer of garden soil was recorded to the north of this wall suggesting that the area reverted to cultivation for a short period prior to its demolition when the area was subsequently capped by a thick layer of building rubble probably during the construction of the existing school buildings.

Significance

The results of the trial trenching show that there is a low potential for archaeological deposits surviving within the application site. The earliest deposit comprises a thick homogenous layer interpreted as a former Medieval cultivation soil and was recorded in both trenches. This was subsequently sealed by a sequence of post-Medieval deposits comprising in the first instance building rubble and burnt material, followed by a sandstone wall and garden soils. A layer of modern building rubble marked the latest deposition resulting in further ground build-up.

Impact of development

The results of the trial trenching have shown that the proposed development is unlikely to impact on archaeological deposits of any significance. Deposits likely to be affected comprise a thick homogenous layer of medieval cultivation soil and an overlying sequence of post-medieval deposits and a former masonry boundary wall.

Archive Location

The digital archive arising from the work will be deposited with the Archaeology Data Service (ADS) and a pdf copy of the report will be sent to the HER. The physical archive will be deposited with the Worcester City Museum.

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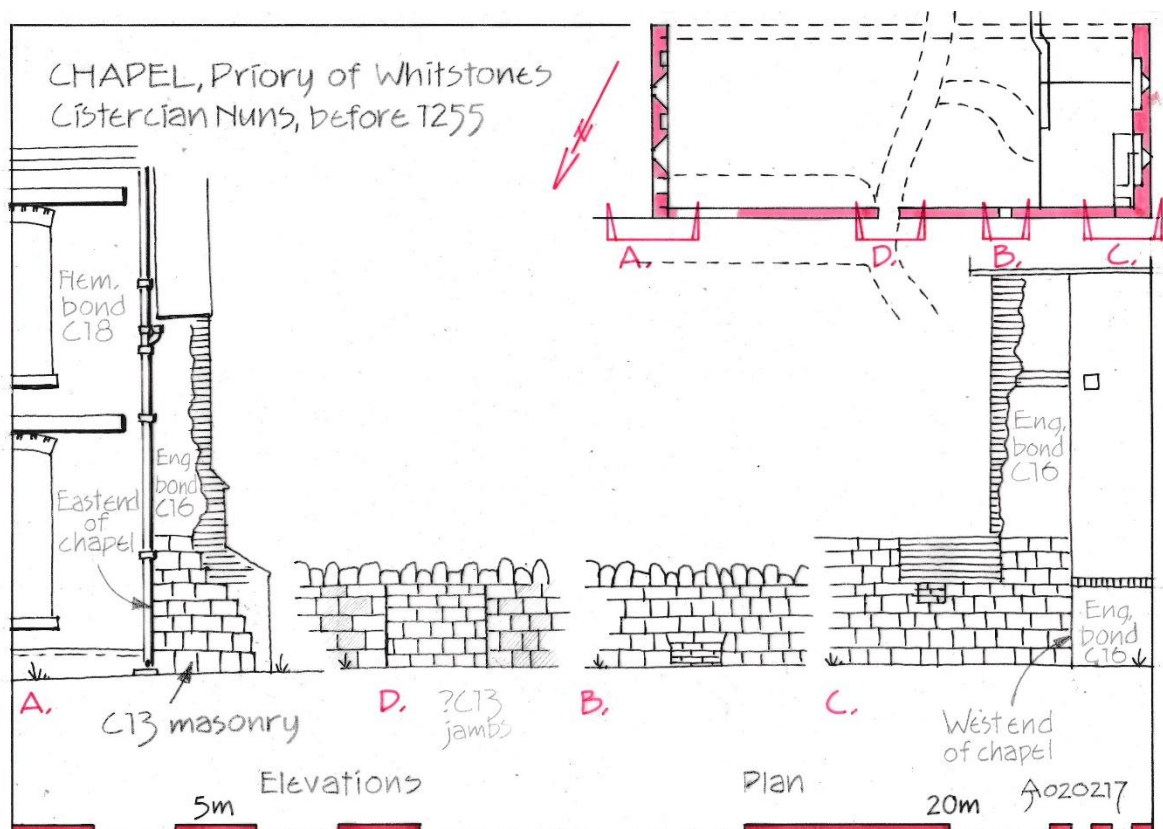
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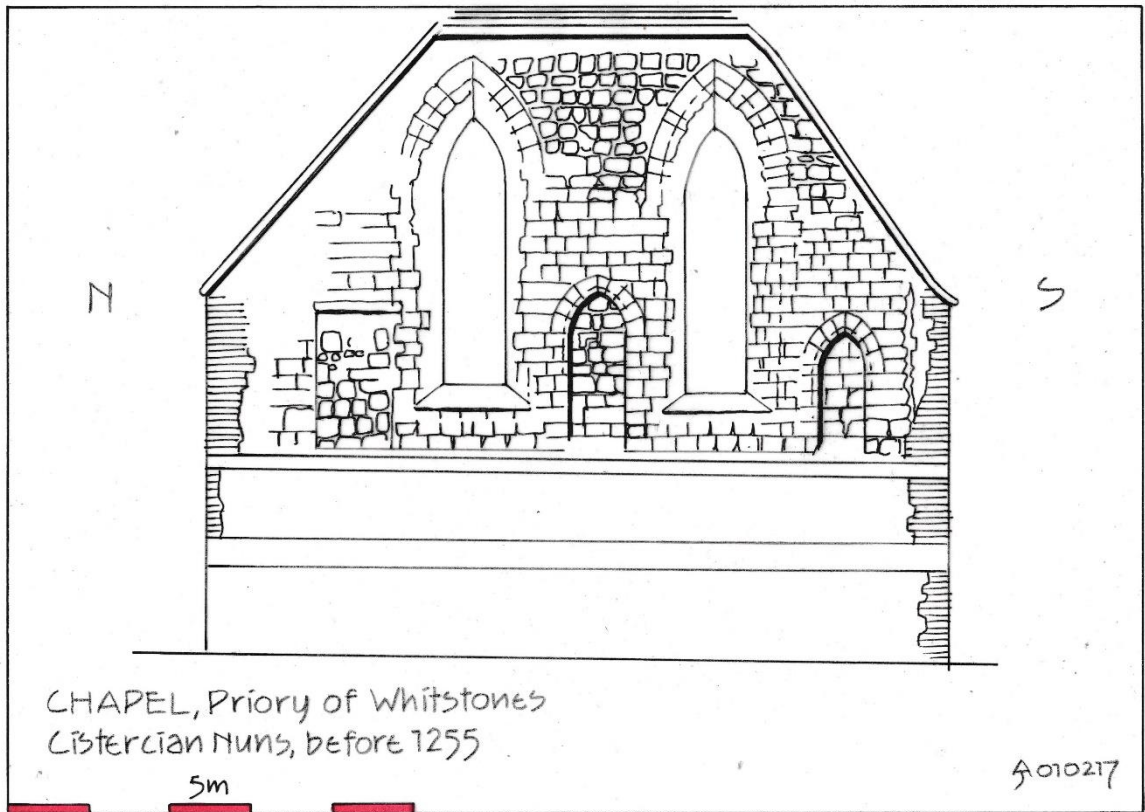
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APPENDIX 1; remains of the Priory Chapel and Tudor Mansion by Jill Atherton

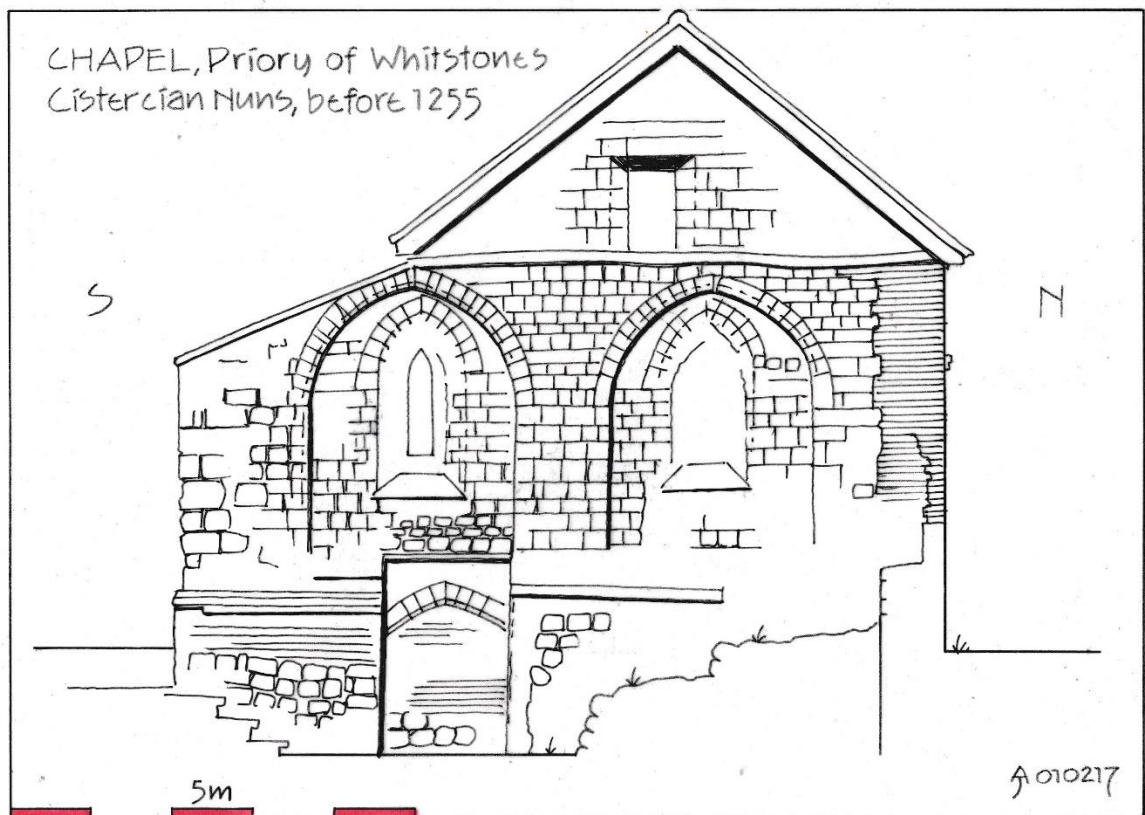
The nunnery of the White Ladies of Aston was a Cistercian House dedicated to St Mary Magdalene, it was founded some time before 1255 and dissolved in 1536. Its early surrender confirms an annual income of under £200 and there are numerous other records of gifts to alleviate the suffering of the nuns in this famously poor house. All that remains of the Priory fabric are the end walls of the C13 chapel, these had been incorporated in the Tudor house which was built on the site. Evidence for this survives in the form of good English-bond brick-work and an assortment of re-used top quality small-field panelling in the C18 house which is consistent with a C16 date. The E plan mansion, labelled as *The White Ladys* on the 1741 map, still retains the re-used chapel at its heart. By 1886 (1st Ed. OS 1:500) the chapel had been demolished and the grounds had been landscaped, the old priory wall providing a fine feature in the fashionable new garden design. The roof of the 2½ storey C18 house is made of large re-used beams and timbers would have been made available when the chapel and Tudor fabric was pulled down. A particularly interesting fragment is a length of a mid-rail for close-studding, once again consistent with a C16 date.



Plan and elevation details of north wall; showing extent of historic features.



East wall elevation showing C16 1st floor doorway inserted at north end.



West wall elevation showing possible C16 masonry incorporated into later gable.



East wall view



West wall view



West wall exterior showing remains of C13 window.



Re-used C16 panelling in C18 house

APPENDIX 2; OASIS

Project name	Royal Grammar School Worcester, Upper Tything, Worcester
Project dates	Start: 11-10-2009 End: 13-10-2009
Previous/future work	No / Not known
Any associated project reference codes	WRGS09 – Site code
Type of project	Field evaluation
Site status	Conservation Area
Current Land use	Other 3 - Built over
Monument type	PRIORY Medieval
Significant Finds	POTTERY Medieval
Significant Finds	POTTERY Post Medieval
Methods & techniques	""Targeted Trenches""
Development type	Large/ medium scale extensions to existing structures (e.g. church, school, hospitals, law courts, etc.)
Prompt	National Planning Policy Framework - NPPF
Position in the planning process	Between deposition of an application and determination
Country	England
Site location	WORCESTERSHIRE WORCESTER WORCESTER Royal Grammar School Worcester, Upper Tything
Postcode	WR1 1HP
Study area	0 Square metres
Site coordinates	SO 84840 55825 52.20004554287 -2.221840123774 52 12 00 N 002 13 18 W Point
Height OD / Depth	Min: 19.7m Max: 20.2m
Name of Organisation	one ten archaeology
Project brief originator	City/Nat. Park/District/Borough archaeologist
Project design originator	one ten archaeology
Project director/manager	sean cook
Project supervisor	sean cook
Type of sponsor/funding body	Landowner
Physical Archive recipient	county museum
Physical Contents	""Ceramics""

Digital Archive recipient	OASIS
Paper Archive recipient	county museum
Paper Media available	"Report"
Publication type	Grey literature (unpublished document/manuscript)
Title	Royal Grammar School Worcester, Upper Tything, Worcester; archaeological evaluation
Author(s)/Editor(s)	Cook, S
Date	2017
Issuer or publisher	one ten archaeology
Place of issue or publication	Warks.
Entered by	sean cook (seancook@btinternet.com)
Entered on	1 February 2017