



Former St John's Ambulance site

11 North Street, Rothley, Leicestershire

Former St John's Ambulance site

11 North Street, Rothley, Leicestershire

Archaeological Evaluation

NGR: SK 58356 12691

Site code: roth19

OASIS ID: 110archa1-346811

Sean Cook BA (Hons) MCIfA

Illustration by Jill Atherton MCIfA

1st April 2019

Contents

<i>SUMMARY</i>	4
<i>INTRODUCTION</i>	6
<i>Location and scope of work (Figs. 1 & 2)</i>	6
<i>Geology and topography</i>	6
<i>Archaeological and historical background</i>	6
<i>EXCAVATION METHODOLOGY</i>	7
<i>Aims of the work</i>	7
<i>Sample size and scope of fieldwork</i>	7
<i>Fieldwork methods and recording</i>	8
<i>RESULTS: GENERAL (Fig. 3)</i>	8
<i>Soil and ground conditions</i>	8
<i>Reliability of field investigation</i>	8
<i>Distribution of archaeological deposits</i>	8
<i>Presentation of results</i>	10
<i>RESULTS: DESCRIPTIONS (Figs. 4 & 5)</i>	10
<i>FINDS</i>	13
<i>Environmental data</i>	13
<i>DISCUSSION (Figs. 6 & 7)</i>	14
<i>Summary of results</i>	15
<i>Significance</i>	16
<i>Impact of development</i>	16
<i>Archive Location</i>	16
<i>BIBLIOGRAPHY</i>	16
<i>APPENDIX 1; OASIS</i>	22

Front cover; 2017 view to the north-west showing the site frontage

SUMMARY

An archaeological evaluation was carried out during March 2019 at the former St John's Ambulance site, 11 North Street, Rothley, Leicestershire in connection with a proposal to develop the site for commercial use.

An earlier desk-based assessment showed that by the late C18 the area had become partly developed with a large house occupying the corner between North Street Woodgate Street. Two cottages, one constructed with local stone in the C18 and the other in the C19 with brick, were later added to the south of the building. The partial remains of these structures were revealed within one of the evaluation trenches near the street frontage. Cartographic and photographic sources show that this range of buildings had been demolished by the second half of C20. A series of features were recorded in the south-west area of the site, two of these comprised two closely aligned C19 or C20 linear ditches probably associated with former rear property boundaries. A single sherd of residual medieval pottery within one of these fills indicated some background medieval activity.

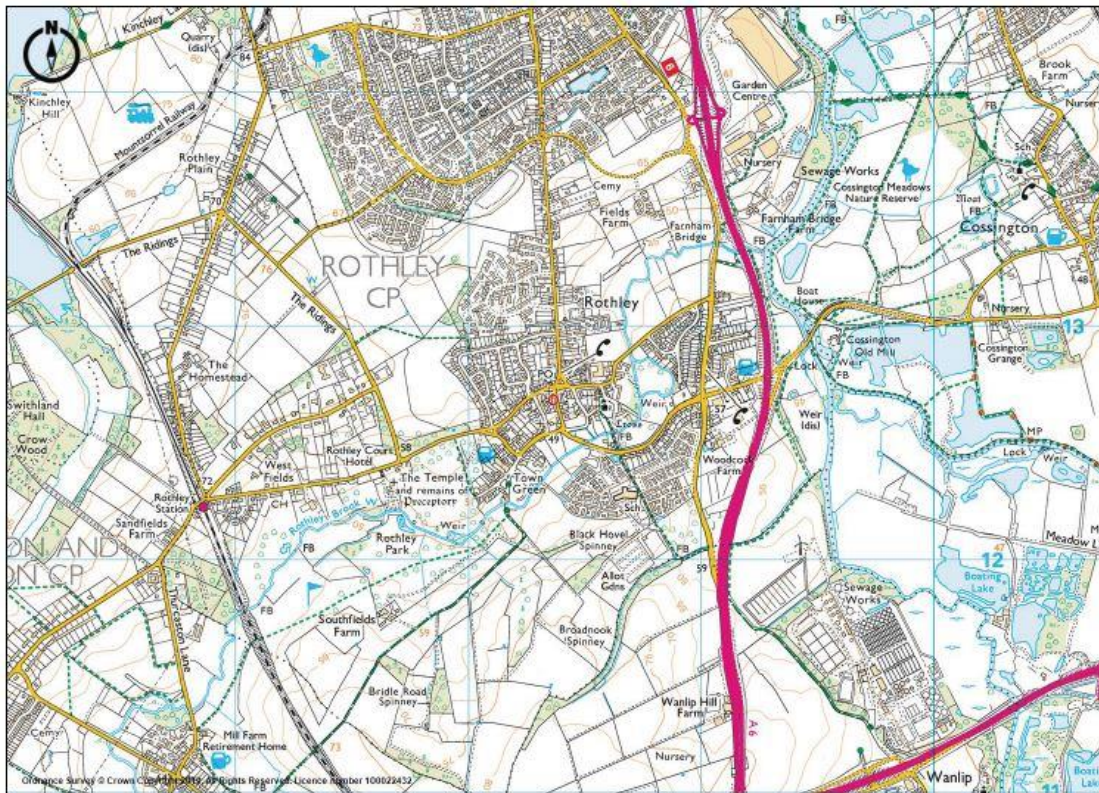


Fig. 1; site location (circled in red)

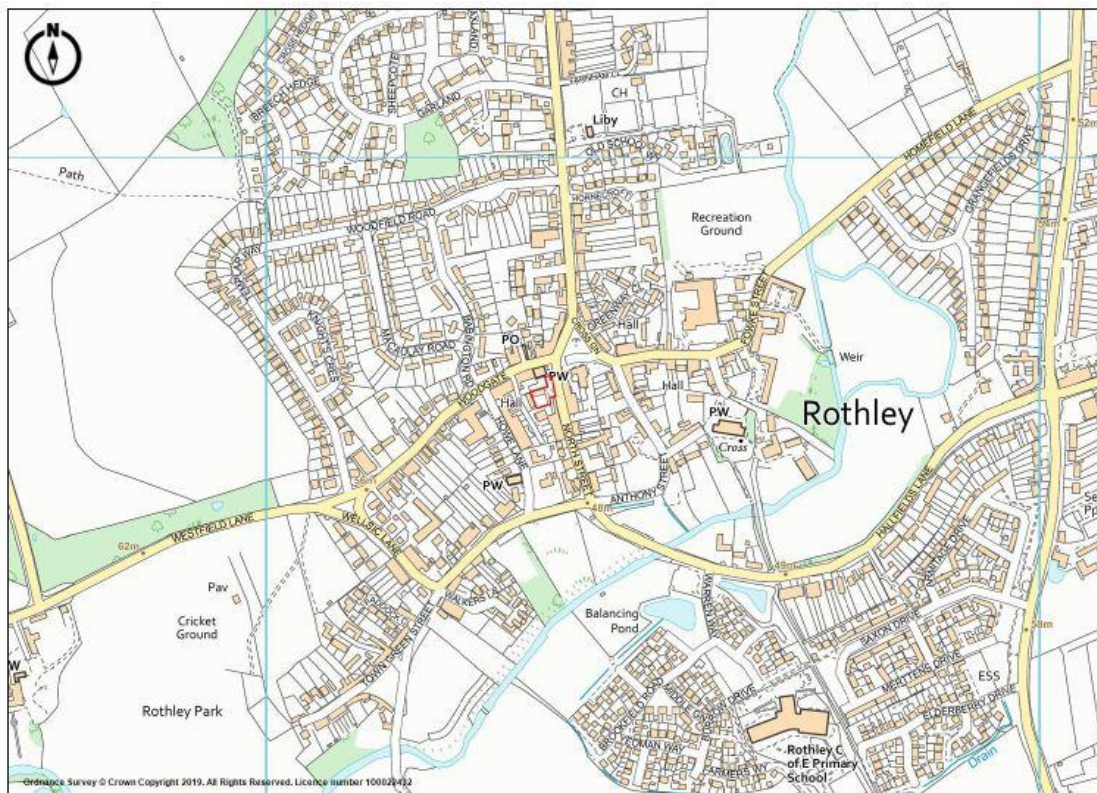


Fig. 2; study site (outlined in red)

INTRODUCTION

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

This document details the results of an archaeological evaluation during 9th and 10th March 2019 at the former St John's Ambulance site, 11 North Street, Rothley, Leicestershire, LE7 7NN at the request of Mr J Hutson at Canon Street Properties. A planning application has been submitted for the development of the site for commercial use. Charnwood Borough Council had approved a proposed development of the site (Planning Application No P/16/2316/2) conditional on the completion of a "desk-based archaeological assessment" in line with the guidance contained in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). The results of the assessment were submitted to the LPA recommending a field evaluation. This would provide sufficient archaeological information in which to assess the impact of the application in line with the NPPF and would if necessary, inform a mitigation strategy for further archaeological work on site prior to the commencement of development.

Geology and topography

The proposed development area is located towards the centre of the village of Rothley, Leicestershire which takes its name from the parish of Rothley. The proposed development area is a brownfield site which comprises approx. 600m², formerly the St John's Ambulance site to the west of North Street. The site consists of a rear derelict concrete sectional building, areas of hard standing and vegetation cover, the boundaries are established property boundaries marked by domestic fencing, standing walls and the highway. The Geological Survey of Great Britain indicates that the underlying geology is likely to be Edwalton Member–Mudstone. The proposed development area lies at approximately 55m Above Ordnance Datum (AOD).

Archaeological and historical background

An archaeological heritage assessment of the former St John's Ambulance site (Richards, 2018), confirmed that the proposed development area is located within a varied archaeological landscape and is located within the centre of the historic settlement of Rothley. Historic map regression confirmed that the proposed

development area has contained standing buildings dating to the C18 and C19, these buildings were demolished during the middle of the C20. The site visit did not reveal any clear evidence of potential archaeological remains within the proposed development area, nor was there any clear evidence of significant modern ground disturbance which would have truncated any potential remains. The assessment concluded that there is a medium to high potential for the survival of buried archaeological remains from the C18 & C19 and potentially remains dating to the medieval period.

EXCAVATION METHODOLOGY

Aims of the work

The objectives of the evaluation were to determine the date, character, quality, survival and extent of the archaeological deposits within the application area likely to be threatened by the proposed development in order that an informed decision on their importance in a local, regional and national context can be made. This information would clarify whether any remains should be considered for preservation *in situ* or form the basis of a mitigation strategy.

In particular, the aims of the investigation will include:

- i) establishing the date, nature and extent of activity or occupation on the development site;
- ii) recovering artefacts to assist in the development of type series within the region;
- iii) recovering palaeo-environmental remains to determine local environmental conditions.

Sample size and scope of fieldwork

The evaluation comprised two trenches located within the main areas of impact anticipated by the proposed development. Trench 1 was 8.5m long and 1.20m wide and located in the south-west area of the site in the footprint of the proposed new building whilst trench 2 which was 5m and 1.20m wide was positioned in the north-east area of the site near the road frontage in the position of a proposed parking bay.

Fieldwork methods and recording

The archaeological field work and post-excavation was carried out in accordance with standards and guidance for archaeological field evaluations produced by the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists (CIfA, 2014). All deposits were excavated removing the overburden under close archaeological supervision and investigated for archaeological features. Plans and sample sections of the trenches were made and recorded during excavation.

RESULTS: GENERAL (Fig. 3)

Soil and ground conditions

Conditions were generally dry during the excavation although the soil layers showed some moisture retention. Excavation was relatively smooth throughout the trench being made through alternate layers of topsoil and underlying subsoil leaving a clean and visible surface within the natural substrate (102 & 203).

Reliability of field investigation

In trench 1 there were three features, two of which were dated by the C19/C20 finds recovered from the fills. All three features appeared truncated as result of activities associated with the overlying layer 101. In trench 2 underlying deposits were truncated by activities associated with the construction of the former structures (204 & 205) the remains of which were partly revealed within the southern half of the trench.

Distribution of archaeological deposits

Excavation revealed remains in both trenches. In trench 1 two C19/C20 roughly parallel linear ditch-like features were recorded across the trench and a further partially exposed feature was revealed in the north end. Trench 2 revealed the partial remains of the two cottages (104 & 105) that formerly occupied the road frontage during the C18 and C19 respectively.

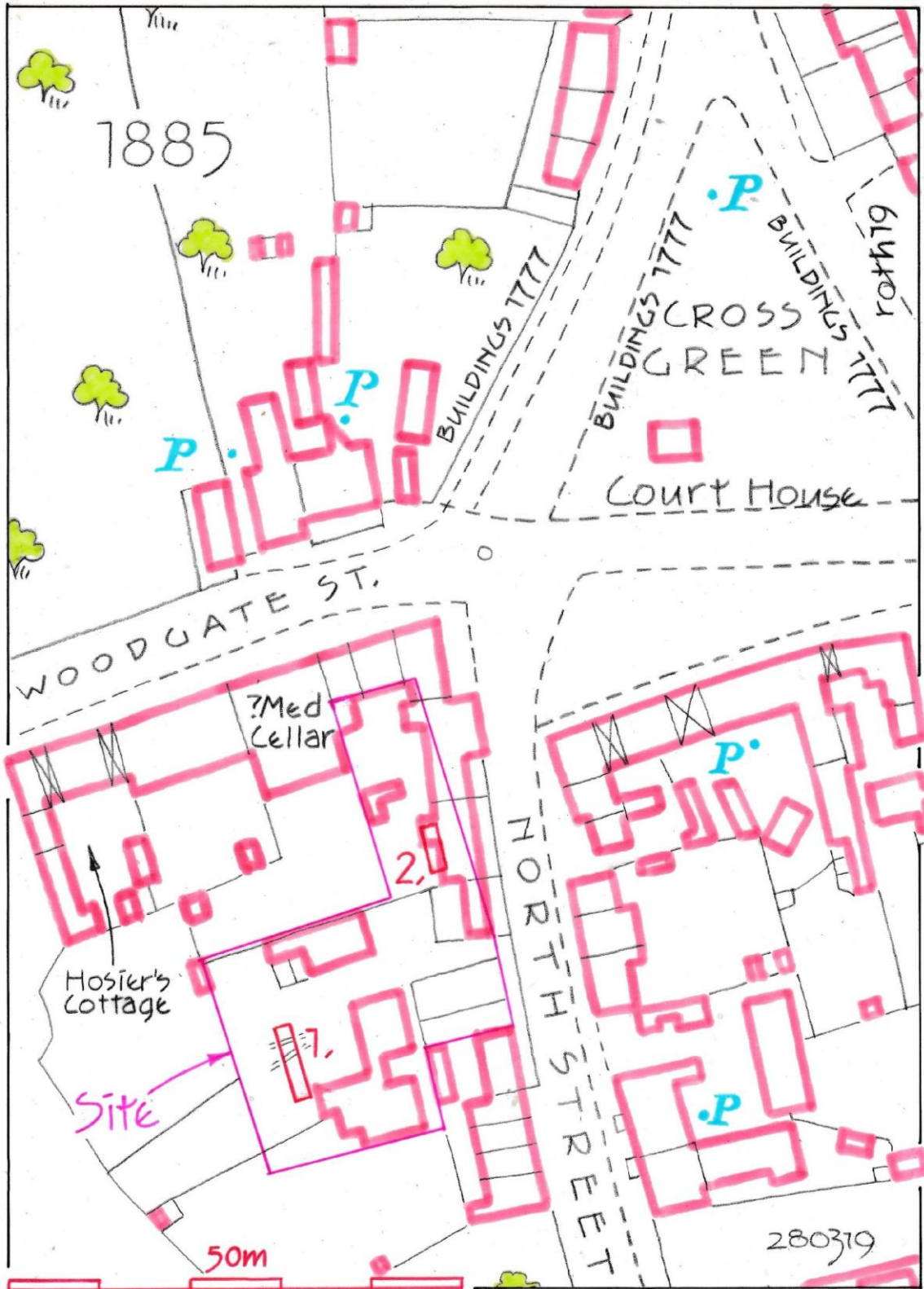


Fig. 3; site plan based on OS First Edition (1885) with trench locations & main archaeological features

Presentation of results

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

RESULTS: DESCRIPTIONS (Figs. 4 & 5)

TRENCH 1

The natural substrate (102) comprised a reddish-orange clay with a large component of small to large rounded pebbles and was exposed throughout the length of the trench. The surface of this deposit was recorded at a height of 55.20m AOD at the north end of the trench sloping down to 54.90m AOD at the south end. Two roughly parallel ditch-like features (104 & 106) both aligned east-west and separated from each other by a distance of about 1.50m were revealed within the northern half of the trench. The slightly larger of the two (feature 104) was 0.60m wide and about 0.20m deep with steep sides and flat base about 0.20m wide. It was filled by a single deposit (103) consisting of a mid-yellowish-brown, sandy-clayey-silt which produced a single small brick fragment, a larger piece of clear glass from a former vessel of C19 or C20 date and a single sherd of medieval pottery. The other feature (106), although also linear, was noticeably irregular. It was situated towards the north end of the trench and was a maximum of 0.45m wide at the west end narrowing slightly to 0.35m at the east end. The feature also showed steeply sloping (irregular) sides and was about 0.15m deep with a flat undulating base which dropped sharply towards the east end. A large fragment of brick associated with the overlying subsoil layer (101) was embedded within the clay on the surface edge of the feature. It was filled by a single deposit (105) equivalent in colour and consistency with the fill deposit 103. Fill 105 produced a small fragment of modern glass from a former vessel.

A third feature (108) was partially exposed in the north-west corner of the trench. Partial excavation of the fill deposit (107) which consisted of a greyish-brown clayey-silt showed a sloping edge, possibly a ditch or pit which continued beyond the edge of the trench. No finds were recovered and it remained undated.

All three features including the natural clay were sealed throughout the trench to a depth of up to 0.35m by the layer (101) consisting of mid-greyish-brown, clayey-sandy-silt with a small component of small-medium sized rounded

pebbles. A large fragment of red brick was found at the base of this deposit partially embedded within the surface edge of feature 106. Overlying this deposit again throughout the length of the trench was a 0.50m thick layer (100) dark greyish-brown of clayey-silt with a component of clinker, and a handful of bricks, some whole.

TRENCH 2

The natural substrate (203) was recorded at a level height of 55.26 AOD throughout a large part of the trench and comprised a reddish-orange clay with a large component of small to large rounded pebbles, equivalent with deposit 102 in trench 1. Overlying this clay and aligned slightly north-west to south-east across the centre of the trench were the remains of a masonry wall (204), the southern face of the wall had survived as a single course, but the north face had been mostly grubbed out as a result of earlier activities, probably during demolition. The masonry wall was abutted along its southern edge by the remains of a brick structure (205) which consisted of a brick wall 0.10m built in a single line of stretchers perpendicular to 204. An area of paving against the west side of the brick wall represented the former internal floor area. Some of the brick paving adjacent to the brick wall were removed during the excavation revealing a cavity (possible cellar) which continued for a depth of at least 1m. Sealing these remains was a 0.20m thick layer of demolition debris (202) comprising soil, frequent fragments of mortar and some bricks. This was in turn overlain by a 0.08m layer of re-deposited natural clay (201) and 0.10m of topsoil (200).

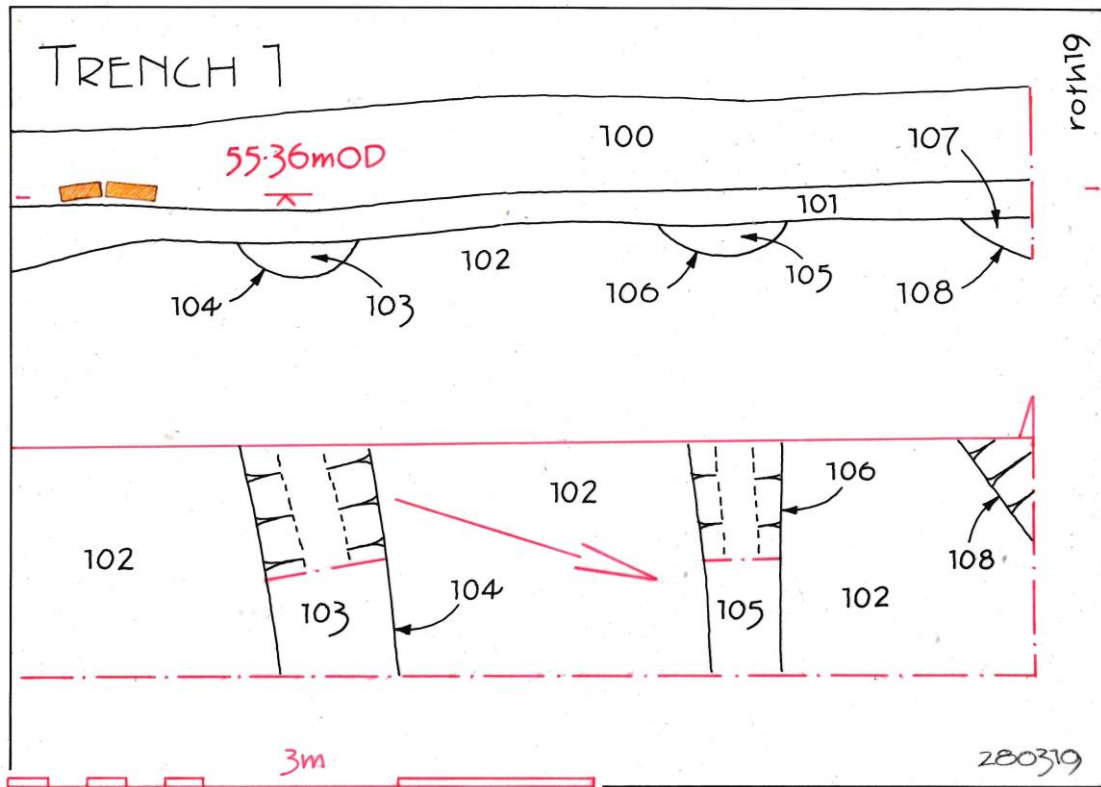


Fig. 4; trench 1 plan & section showing stratigraphic sequence

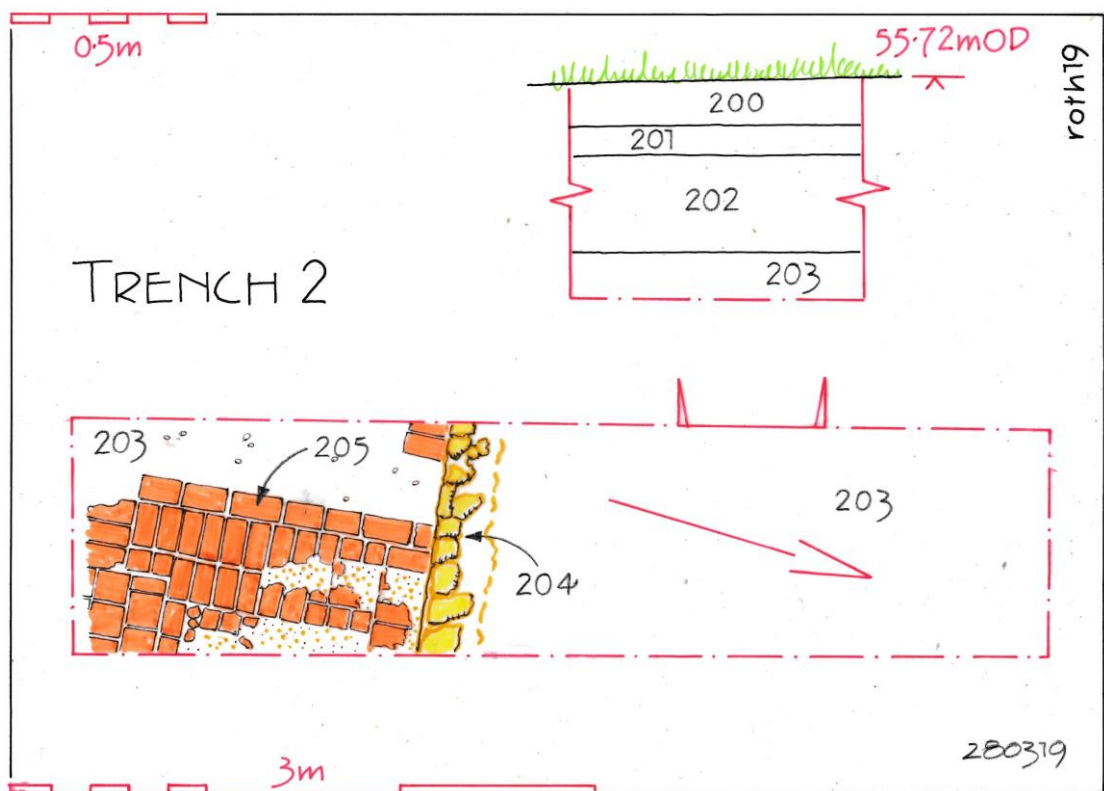


Fig. 5; trench 2 plan & section showing stratigraphic sequence

FINDS

Pottery by Paul Blinkhorn

A single sherd of pottery weighing 12g occurred in context 103. It is a fragment from the neck of an unglazed jug in Potters Marston Ware, fabric PM of the Leicestershire County type-series (Sawday 1994), and dateable to the C12 – C13. It is a very common find at sites in the region. The sherd is in very good condition and is likely to be reliably stratified.

Ceramic building material

A single brick fragment weighing 16g was recovered from fill deposit 103. This is likely to be of either C19 or C20 date.

Glass

Two fragments of glass were recovered during the excavations weighing a total of 13g from the fills of two linear features (104 & 106). Fill deposit 103 produced a single curved fragment of clear glass weighing 12g with a regular width of between 3-4mm. It is probably from a former C19 or C20 vessel. Fill deposit 105 also produced a single curved fragment of clear glass weighing 1g and with a regular width of between 3-4mm. It is also probably from a former C19 or C20 vessel.

Environmental data

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

DISCUSSION (Figs. 6 & 7)

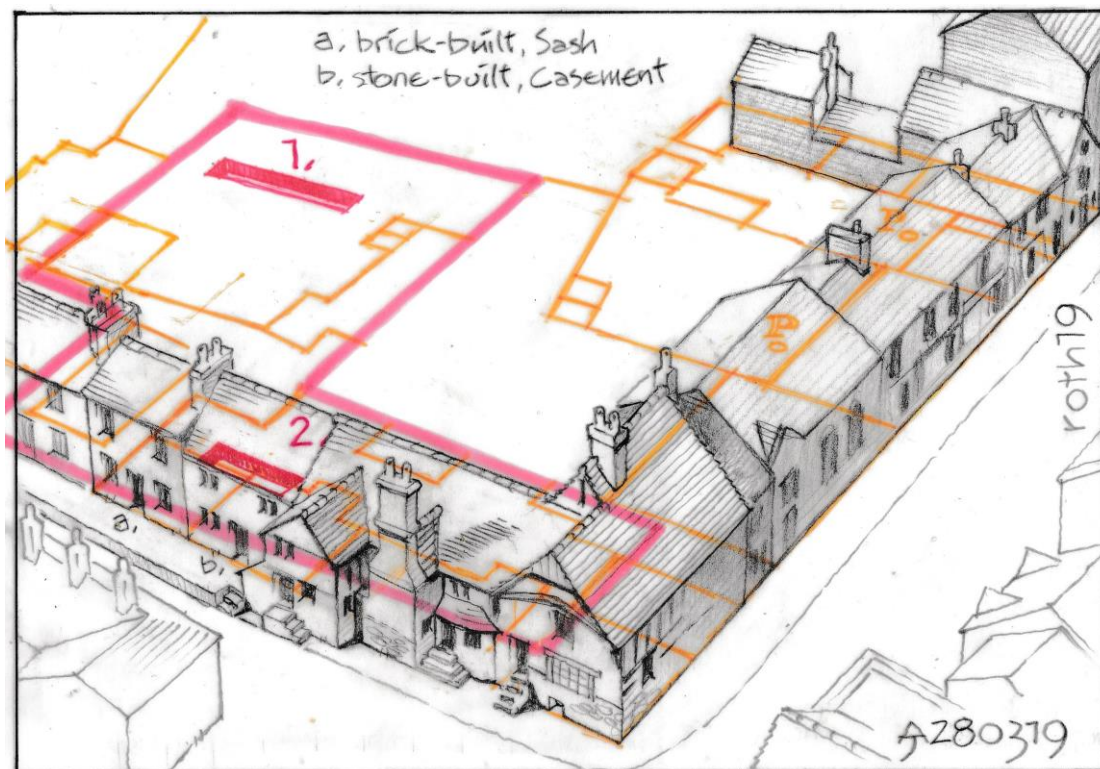


Fig. 6; reconstructed view from the north-east showing the historic built environment, based on photographic evidence and the OS 1885 (orange)

An earlier desk-based assessment (Richards, 2017) showed that by the late C18 the area in the corner of North Street and Woodgate Street had become partly developed. The application site incorporates some of this area and at this time included undeveloped land to the south-west and a stretch along the North Street frontage which is shown to have contained a lost building situated in the corner between North Street Woodgate Street. Numerous photographs of Rothley are available on Google which appear to pre-date 1885 and show that North Street and the adjacent area contained many medieval timber-framed dwellings with thatched roofs and were largely replaced in the C19 with brick-built houses. One of these photographs shows the house on the corner of North Street which study shows is medieval in form with a probable C15 timber-framed cross-wing. Modifications were carried out in the C17 and accretions such as the projected wing to the rear were also added in the C18. By 1885 two cottages were built on the south end of this range, the more southerly building was brick-built with sash windows (a) whilst the other (b) was an earlier C18 stone building with casement windows. Another cottage was also situated at the south end of the range of buildings,

roughly in the location of the existing site entrance, but by the time of the 1885 survey it had been demolished.

Excavation revealed earlier activity in both trenches. In the south-west corner of the site (trench 1) two linear ditch-like features (104 & 106), not quite parallel, but both closely aligned on a slight north-east to south-west axis were recorded. The two features were different in both width and depth suggesting that they were the result of different activities, possibly a former drainage/boundary ditch. They appeared possibly truncated and were both filled by deposits similar with the overlying layer suggesting possible disturbance associated with later activities, perhaps some level of cultivation. Although one of these fills (104) produced a single sherd of medieval pottery, the presence of a large modern piece of a glass vessel and a small fragment of brick within the same context suggests that the feature was associated with a modern event and that the medieval sherd is intrusive. The other smaller and more irregular linear feature (106) also produced a small piece of modern glass and a half-brick fragment embedded within the upper edge of the feature. The evidence suggests that this feature was also associated with more recent activities. The upper stratigraphy of the trench was characterised by a layer of soil with residual building debris deposited during demolition of the earlier C19 buildings.

In the area along the road frontage trenching revealed the partial remains of two cottages. The masonry wall remains (204) are related to one of the former cottages (b) and the brick structure adjacent to this conforms with the location of the cottage (a) at the southern end of the range of buildings.

Summary of results

The investigation revealed two closely aligned ditch-like features and a possibly similar or pit feature in the south-west corner of the site. Finds from the two parallel linear features suggests they are modern in origin although the presence of a C13-C14 pot sherd within one of the fills is an indication of background medieval activity. This is also supported by the evidence for medieval houses along the North Street frontage. The partial remains of two now demolished cottages formerly situated along the road frontage equate with an C18 masonry cottage and a later brick-built cottage that were demolished in the second half of the C20.

Significance

The results of the evaluation support the earlier findings of a desk-based assessment which showed that the site had become partly occupied by the C18 with further development taking place in the C19. Ditch features to the rear of the site and the remains former buildings on the street frontage can be attributed to this period of activity.

Impact of development

The results of the investigation show that the impact of the new parking bay near the existing road frontage will be on the remains of a pair of cottages, one built in the C18 and the other in the C19. In the south-west corner of the site in the area of the proposed new building a series of three features will be impacted on, although one of these was undated, the two remaining features each produced finds indicating a C19 or C20 date for their construction.

Archive Location

The digital archive arising from the work will be deposited with the Archaeology Data Service (ADS). The physical archive will be deposited with the Leicestershire Museum Service.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

CIfA, 2014. *Standard and Guidance for an Archaeological Evaluation*, Chartered Institute for Archaeologists.

Richards, G., 2018. *An Archaeological Assessment; St John's Ambulance site (former), North Street, Rothley, Leicestershire*, Archaeological Building Recording Services report.

Sawday, D, 1994. The post-Roman pottery in P Clay and R Pollard *Iron Age and Roman Occupation in the West Bridge Area, Leicester. Excavations 1962-71* Leics. Museums



Plate 1; trench 1, view to the NW



Plate 2; trench 1, view to the SW



Plate 3; fill deposit 103, view to the SE



Plate 4; fill deposit 105, view to the E



Plate 5; feature 104, view to the W



Plate 6; feature 106, view to the NE



Plate 7; section from trench 1 across feature 104 & fill 103



Plate 8; trench 2, view to the NW



Plate 9; south end of trench 2, view to the W showing remains of wall 204 & brick structure 205

APPENDIX 1; OASIS

Project details

Project name	Former St John's Ambulance site North Street, Rothley, Leicestershire; Archaeological Evaluation
Project dates	Start: 09-03-2019 End: 10-03-2019
Previous/future work	Yes / Not known
Any associated project reference codes	roth19 - Sitecode
Type of project	Field evaluation
Site status	None
Current Land use	Vacant Land 1 - Vacant land previously developed
Monument type	LINEAR GULLY/DITCH Post Medieval
Monument type	LINEAR GULLY/DITCH Post Medieval
Significant Finds	POTTERY Medieval
Significant Finds	GLASS Post Medieval
Significant Finds	BRICK Post Medieval
Methods & techniques	"Targeted Trenches"
Development type	Urban commercial (e.g. offices, shops, banks, etc.)
Prompt	National Planning Policy Framework - NPPF
Position in the planning process	Between deposition of an application and determination

Project location

Country	England
Site location	LEICESTERSHIRE CHARNWOOD ROTHLEY Former St John's Ambulance site, North Street
Postcode	LE7 7NN
Study area	600 Square metres
Site coordinates	SK 58356 12691 52.708391496945 -1.136163729682 52 42 30 N 001 08 10 W Point
Height OD / Depth	Min: 54.9m Max: 55.26m

Project creators

Name of Organisation	one ten archaeology
Project brief originator	Local Authority Archaeologist and/or Planning Authority/advisory body
Project design originator	one ten archaeology
Project	sean cook

director/manager
Project supervisor sean cook
Type of sponsor/funding body Landowner

Project archives

Physical Contents "Ceramics","Glass"
Digital Archive recipient OASIS
Paper Archive recipient county museum
Paper Contents "Ceramics","Glass"
Paper Media available "Notebook - Excavation',' Research',' General Notes","Photograph","Plan","Report","Section"

Project bibliography 1

Publication type Grey literature (unpublished document/manuscript)
Title Former St John's Ambulance site North Street, Rothley, Leicestershire; Archaeological Evaluation
Author(s)/Editor(s) Cook, S
Date 2019
Issuer or publisher one ten archaeology
Place of issue or publication Warwickshire
URL <http://www.oasis.ac.uk>
Entered by sean cook (sean@onetenarchaeology.co.uk)
Entered on 26 March 2019