

**KING STREET/ QUEEN STREET
JUNCTION REFURBISHMENT,
DERBY:
AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL
WATCHING BRIEF. 2005**

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by
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FIGURES (Missing)

- Figure 1: Location of site
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PLATES (Missing)

- Plate 1: Site oriented south toward St Michael's
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Plate 3: Site oriented toward St Mary's (2)

APPENDIX

Junction improvements – King Street, Derby.
Written Scheme of Investigation for Archaeological Watching Brief. (Removed)

SUMMARY

In October 2005 Birmingham Archaeology monitored groundworks in Derby at the junction of King Street and Queen Street (NGR SK351367). The groundworks were undertaken by Derby City Council in order to improve the road traffic controls and pedestrian access at the junction of these roads, which included the construction of a new footpath aligned north-south between the junction of King Street and Queen Street and the existing footpath from St Mary's Roman Catholic Church. The area of the proposed footpath was graded down by mechanical excavator, in order to create a flat surface for the setting of the path. Overburden to a depth of 0.25m and 0.8m was excavated across the area. This revealed the remains of a concrete path set onto a hardcore bedding aligned approximately north-south along the same line as the proposed path. A mound of earth overlay this, probably a spoil heap associated with the construction of the footpath over the ring road, which was located to the north of the site. No evidence of archaeological features or artefacts was exposed during the course of the watching brief.

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1 INTRODUCTION

Birmingham Archaeology was commissioned by Derby City Council's Department of Development and Cultural Services to undertake an archaeological watching brief during a programme of road refurbishment at the junction of King Street and Queen Street in Derby (hereinafter referred to as the site, centred on NGR SK351367 (Fig. 1 and 2).

The watching brief was undertaken in October 2005 and follows guidelines laid down in the Institute of Field Archaeologists *Standards and Guidance for Archaeological Watching Briefs* (IFA 1994) and is in accordance with Planning Policy Guidance Note 16 (DoE 1990). It conforms to a written scheme of investigation by Birmingham Archaeology (Birmingham Archaeology 2004) approved by the Development Control Archaeologist, prior to implementation.

2 SITE LOCATION AND DESCRIPTION

The site was located at the junction of King Street and Queen Street to the north of Derby City centre and to the west of the River Derwent, centred on NGR SK351367. The watching brief focused only on the groundworks associated with the modification of the existing road layout and the addition of a new footpath, which was constructed to the north of the junction linking the pedestrian footbridge crossing the ring road. The site where the footpath was to be located comprised a grassy bank with a small mound on top, which sloped broadly southwards. The natural topography of the area has been heavily modified in recent years by the construction of the ring road, immediately north of the site. However, it is probable that this area was originally situated on land which rose higher than its surroundings, toward the top of a gravel terrace created by the River Derwent and the Markeaton Brook (Kinsley 2004). The underlying geology comprises Bunter pebble beds, sandstone and Mercia Mudstone, overlain by alluvial deposits (Conway 2002).

3 HISTORICAL AND ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

The site is located within the historic centre of Derby. It had been suggested that line of King Street and Queen Street shadow the approximate line of a prehistoric trackway, following the course of the River Derwent (Conway 2002). To date, however, no archaeological evidence has come to light to support this supposition. The Roman fort of *Derwentio*, which was probably occupied until the 3rd century is known to have been situated to the northeast of the site, though it is not likely it was associated in any way with the development of the post-Roman city of Derby (*ibid.*). The settlement of Derby itself can be traced back to the 8th century when it was identified as an important royal estate called Northworthy, within the Anglo-Saxon kingdom of Mercia (*ibid.*). It is thought that the defensive earthworks associated with this settlement are located almost immediately to the north of the site (Kinsley 2004.).

The former church of St Alkmund, demolished in 1967-8 was situated close to the site (Conway 2002). Historical evidence suggests that this church was probably established in the early 9th century, shortly before the Danes occupied Mercia and Derby became one of the Five

Boroughs of the Danelaw, until unification with the English Kingdom in 1016 (*ibid.*). Archaeological evidence excavated beneath the site of the 19th century church of St Alkmund confirmed the presence of multiple phases of ecclesiastical occupation dating back earlier than the 9th century (Kinsley 2004).

By the time of the Norman Conquest Derby was an important regional centre, which continued to prosper throughout the medieval period and onwards into the industrial revolution (Conway 2002). Large-scale remodelling of the city centre in the 1950s and 1960s radically altered much of the historic character of Derby in the vicinity of the site; however, it is possible to trace some of the original character through the names and layouts of the modern day streets (*ibid.*). Directly to the northeast and the south of the site archaeological evidence was recovered dating to the Saxo-Norman, medieval and post-medieval periods (Bain pers. Comm.). Indicating that there may be a potential for the survival of significant archaeological deposits within the vicinity area of the site although none were encountered during the course of this work (*ibid.*).

The site is located close to routes which have probably not moved significantly since they were first laid out, perhaps as early as 1610. Widening and remodelling of the carriageway may even have preserved some of the earliest evidence, possibly providing information relating to the putative prehistoric trackway. The footpath to the north of the site is probably located within the former grounds of St Alkmund's and the dwellings surrounding the church, indicated on the map of 1610. To date, unfortunately the sequence and extent of early occupation in this part of Derby remains little understood (Kinsley 2004). It is hoped that further development in and around the area may in time provide better information.

4 AIMS

The general aim of the evaluation was to determine the character, state of preservation and the potential significance of any buried remains.

Specific aims were to:

- To monitor all groundworks, including the excavation of any foundation and service trenches.
- To record the location, extent, date, character, condition, significance and quality of any surviving archaeological remains affected by the development works.
- To identify all previously unrecorded sites in order to update the SMR.
- To preserve all archaeological deposits 'by record', and conserve for long term conservation and future analysis all artefactual/ ecofactual material recovered from the site.

These aims were achieved through a programme of archaeological monitoring visits to the site during groundworks.

5 METHODOLOGY

Groundworks involved the machine stripping of overburden, which were monitored by a suitably qualified archaeologist. This was 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. Features were planned, and sections were drawn through all cut features and significant vertical stratigraphy. 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.

Recovered finds were cleaned, marked and remedial conservation work was undertaken as necessary. Treatment of all finds conformed to guidance contained within 'A strategy for the care and investigation of finds' published by English Heritage.

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). Finds and the paper archive will be deposited with the appropriate repository subject to permission from the landowner.

6 RESULTS

6.1 The Footpath

The footpath was cut through a small mound to a maximum depth of 0.8m from the modern surface. The earliest deposit encountered was the top of a layer of hardcore (1003). A layer of degraded concrete capped this (Plate 2 and 3). A layer of dark silt and rubble (1001) lay above this, which created the mound. This mound had a maximum depth of 0.8m towards the north of the site and petered out toward the centre of the site. Pottery retrieved from this layer dated to 19th and 20th centuries and also included large pieces of 20th century rubble and plastic. A layer of turf associated with shallow topsoil (1001) covered the area of the footpath to a depth of 0.1m. Artefacts retrieved from this dated to the 19th and 20th century.

7 DISCUSSION

To the north of the site the footpath construction revealed the remnants of a concrete path or road. It is probable this relates to the road, which is visible on the 1st edition ordinance survey map running north-south on the western side of the church, connecting King Street and Bridge Street. This may have been resurfaced with a concrete bed earlier in the 20th century, prior to becoming redundant in the 1960s following the construction of the ring road to the north of the site. No evidence of archaeological significance was recovered during the watching brief to indicate any likelihood of surviving deposits in the locality, though this does not preclude further development shedding light on earlier activity.

8 ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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9 REFERENCES

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9.1 Cartographic sources

1610 Speed