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Leicester**

**Archaeological Services**

**An Archaeological Evaluation on Land  
Adjacent to Highgate Drive,  
Priorslee East, Telford, Shropshire  
NGR: 372288, 310685]**



Roger Kipling

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On Land Adjacent to Highgate Drive,  
Priorslee East, Telford, Shropshire  
NGR: 372288, 310685]**

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**For: URS**

Approved by:

**Signed:**



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## **An Archaeological Evaluation on Land Adjacent to Highgate Drive, Priorslee East, Telford, Shropshire**

**[NGR: 372288, 310685]**

Roger Kipling

### **Summary**

*An archaeological evaluation was undertaken in January 2013 by University of Leicester Archaeological Services on behalf of URS. The fieldwork was a pre-determination requirement on a planning application for residential development on land adjacent to Highgate Drive, Priorslee East, Telford, Shropshire, in order that the potential impact of the development on archaeological remains may be assessed by the Planning Authority and an appropriate mitigation strategy put in place.*

*The evaluation at Priorslee East, Telford, revealed no indications of archaeological activity, including evidence for Roman activity associated with Watling Street, as had been postulated. The possibility of modern plough truncation of archaeological features, as evidenced by a shallow plough soil, may explain this absence of archaeology.*

*The site archive will be deposited with Shropshire County Council.*

### **Introduction**

An archaeological evaluation via trial trenching was undertaken on land to the east of Highgate Drive, Priorslee East, Telford, Shropshire, grid reference 372288, 310685, on behalf of URS in January 2013 in association with the proposed construction of residential housing.

In view of the potential impact of the development upon archaeological remains, in accordance with National Planning Policy Framework Section 12: Conserving and Enhancing the Historic Environment (DCLG March 2012), and following recommendations by the Senior Archaeological Projects Officer, Shropshire County Council, the planning authority required that evaluation by trial trenching be undertaken.

The fieldwork specified was intended to provide further indications of character and extent of any buried archaeological remains in order that the potential impact of the development on such remains might be assessed. Fieldwork was undertaken in January 2013 and involved the machine excavation of three trial trenches in order to assess the archaeological potential of the development area.

The archaeological evaluation was undertaken in accordance with National Planning Policy Framework Section 12: Conserving and Enhancing the

Historic Environment (DCLG March 2012). All archaeological work was in accordance with the Institute for Archaeologists (IfA) Code of Conduct (2010) and adhered to their *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Field Evaluation* (2008).

## Site Description, Topography and Geology

The site is located within Priorslee and is dissected by Castle Farm Way into two areas; Priorslee East and Priorslee West. Priorslee East is located along the eastern boundary of Telford and defined as the area bounded by Castle Farm Way to the west and south west, the A5 to the north, land owned by Lord Stafford to the east, and the Woodhouse area to the south. The site is the remaining undeveloped area of Priorslee East and comprises mainly maintained grassland. All parcels of land are identified with signs as being private land, not accessible by the public.

The proposed development site lies on the northeast outskirts of Telford and approximately 12km to the east of the local landmark, the Wrekin, a hill dominating the local landscape. The British Geological Survey states that the underlying geology consists of Carboniferous Upper Coal Measures, comprising Keele Beds of mudstones and siltstones, overlain by Glacial Till.

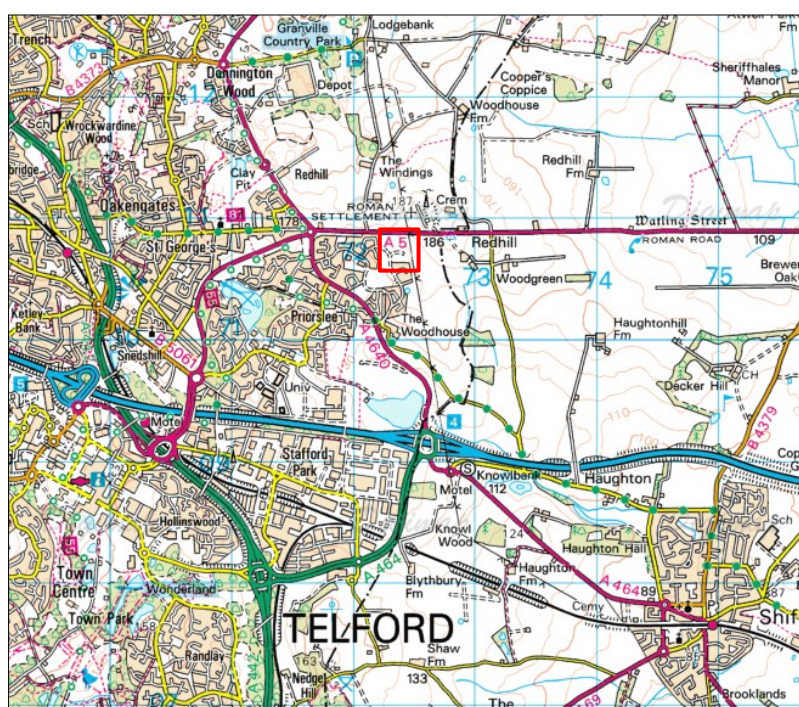


Figure 1: Site Location (Scale 1:50 000)

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## **Archaeological and Historical Background**

### ***Heritage Update Statement***

URS was commissioned by the Home & Communities Agency to complete a Heritage Update Statement to support the renewal of an existing outline planning application. The existing outline application was submitted in 2002 (ref. W2002/1421) and approved in July 2009. No archaeological remains were identified within the proposed development. A study of the known archaeological resource within the region identified that the county contains archaeological evidence of occupation for all periods from the Mesolithic period (10,000-4,000BC) onwards.

The edge of the proposed development site is approximately 230m west of the Scheduled Monuments at *Uxacona* Roman settlement and Redhill Roman camp, and lies on the southern boundary of the A5 (formerly the route of Watling Street Roman road). It is likely that peripheral and related settlement evidence survives outside the boundaries of these monuments and hence there was deemed high potential for the discovery of Roman period occupation or funerary activity within the footprint of the proposed development site.

### ***Geophysical Survey***

A detailed gradiometry survey was conducted over approximately 3.72 hectares of mixed agricultural and grassland located in Priorslee East in Telford. No anomalies of probable archaeological origin were identified.

## **Aims and Methods**

The aims of the archaeological evaluation were to:

1. Identify the presence/absence of any earlier building phases or archaeological deposits.
2. Establish the character, extent and date range for any archaeological deposits to be affected by proposed ground-works.
3. Record any archaeological deposits to affected by the ground-works.
4. Produce an archive and report of any results.

Within the stated project objectives, the principal aim of the evaluation was to establish the nature, extent, date, depth, significance and state of preservation of archaeological deposits on the site in order to determine the potential impact upon them from the development. Specifically, the primary aim of the archaeological trial trenching was to investigate the area of the southern boundary of the A5 (Watling Street) previously identified by geophysical survey as archaeologically blank.

All work was recorded in accordance with the Institute for Archaeologists (IfA) *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Watching Briefs*, the standard policy and practice of ULAS. The University of Leicester's Health and Safety policy was adhered to.

Proceeding from the Written Scheme of Investigation (URS 2012) drawn up by URS in consultation with the Senior Archaeological Projects Officer, Shropshire County Council, a programme of archaeological trial trenching was undertaken, consisting of c.255m<sup>2</sup> of trenching, comprising three 50m x 1.7m trenches. Excavation was undertaken using a tracked mechanical excavator fitted with a 1.7m wide toothless ditching bucket, with overburden removed carefully in level spits under continuous archaeological supervision.

## Results

### *Archaeological Evaluation*

Proceeding directly from the watching brief phase, the archaeological evaluation was undertaken between 22nd and 23rd January 2013, consisting of three 50m x 1.7m trenches, positioned in order to provide a representative sample across the area of the recent geophysical survey, centring on the area closest to Watling Street.

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Figure 2: Location of trial trenches (blue) in relation to area of geophysical survey (grey)

### *Trench 1*

Trench 1 measured 50m x 1.70m and was aligned east-west. A shallow (0.30m-0.40m) mid grey-brown clay loam plough soil overlay a dull reddish-brown sandy clay natural clay with manganese flecking, changing to a patchy, more sandy reddish-brown and pale yellow clay towards the western end of the trench. The absence of subsoil and paucity of topsoil suggests plough truncation.





Figure 3: Trench 1: general view east; 1m scales



Figure 4: Trench 1: general view west; 1m scales



### *Trench 2*

Trench 2 (50m x 1.7m) was aligned north-south and positioned between Trenches 1 and 3. 0.25m-0.40m of plough soil overlay a dull pale whitish-yellow natural sand with dull orange-brown clay banding. The southern, downslope section of the trench was characterised by a dense dull reddish-orange clay with bands of whitish-yellow sand. The trench was archaeologically blank and crossed diagonally by several modern land drainage pipes.



Figure 5: Trench 2, general view north; scales 1m

### *Trench 3*

The third and final trench (50m x 1.7m) lay east of Trench 1 on the same east-west alignment. The same dull reddish-brown natural clay with heavy manganese flecking was revealed below 0.35m-0.40m of plough soil. Two modern land drains traversed the trench on a north-east to south-west alignment. There were no indications of archaeological activity.



Figure 6: Trench 3, general view west; 1m scales



Figure 7: Trench 3; general view east; 1m scales

### Trench Table

TRENCH	ORIENTATION	LENGTH AND WIDTH (metres)	DESCRIPTION	DEPTH (MIN- MAX metres)
1	E-W	50 x 1.70	0.30m-0.40m of mid grey-brown clay loam plough soil. No archaeological finds or features.	0.40-50
2	N-S	50 x 1.70	0.25m-0.40m of mid grey-brown clay loam plough soil. No archaeological finds or features.	0.35-0.60
3	N-S	50 x 1.70	0.35m-0.45m of mid grey-brown clay loam plough soil. No archaeological finds or features.	0.45-0.55

### Conclusions

The evaluation at Priorslee East, Telford, revealed no indications of archaeological activity, with no evidence for Roman activity associated with Watling Street, as had been postulated. The possibility of modern plough truncation of archaeological features, as evidenced by a shallow plough soil, may partially explain this absence of archaeological deposits.

### Archive and Publications

The site archive consisting of a paper and photographic records, will be deposited with Shropshire County Council under Site Code **TPS-2013**

The archive consists of:

- 3 trench recording sheets
- Photographic record indices
- 20 digital photographs
- 13 x monochrome (film) photographs
- A risk assessment form

### Publication

A version of the excavation summary (see above) will appear in due course in the *Transactions of the Shropshire Archaeological and Historical Society*.

### Acknowledgements

Roger Kipling of ULAS undertook the archaeological evaluation on behalf of URS. The project was managed by Richard Buckley.

## Bibliography

Brown, D., 2008 *Standard and guidance for the preparation of Archaeological Archives* (Institute for Archaeologists)

IfA, 2008 *Codes of Conduct and Standards and Guidance for Archaeological Field Evaluation*.

URS., 2012 *Specification for Archaeological Trial Trenching at Priorslee East, Telford*. URS

## Oasis Information

Project Name	Priorslee East, Telford, Shropshire
Project Type	Archaeological evaluation
Project Manager	Richard Buckley
Project Supervisor	Roger Kipling
Previous/Future work	Development subject to planning permission
Current Land Use	Rough grassland
Development Type	Residential
Reason for Investigation	PPS5
Position in the Planning Process	Pre-determination
Site Co ordinates	NGR 431010, 297640
Start/end dates of field work	January 2013
Archive Recipient	Shropshire County Council
Study Area	3.72 ha.

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