



An Archaeological Evaluation by Trial Trenching

Town Square, Madeley, Telford, Shropshire

NGR: 36958 30433

Steve Baker

For: Bowmer and Kirkland and Tesco Stores Limited

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An Archaeological Evaluation by Trial Trenching of Land at the Town Square, Madeley, Telford, Shropshire

Summary

University of Leicester Archaeological Services (ULAS) carried out an archaeological evaluation by trial trenching for Bowmer and Kirkland and Tesco Stores Limited on the 23rd-24th September 2008 on land at Town Square, Madeley, Telford, Shropshire (NGR: 36958 30433). The work was carried out as part of an impact assessment in advance of residential and commercial development. There was evidence for extensive modern truncation of the proposed development area and no deposits of archaeological significance were revealed.

Introduction

An archaeological evaluation was carried out by ULAS for Bowmer and Kirkland and Tesco Stores Limited on the 23rd-24th September 2008 on land at the Town Square, Madeley, Telford, Shropshire (NGR: 36958 30433) (Figure 1).

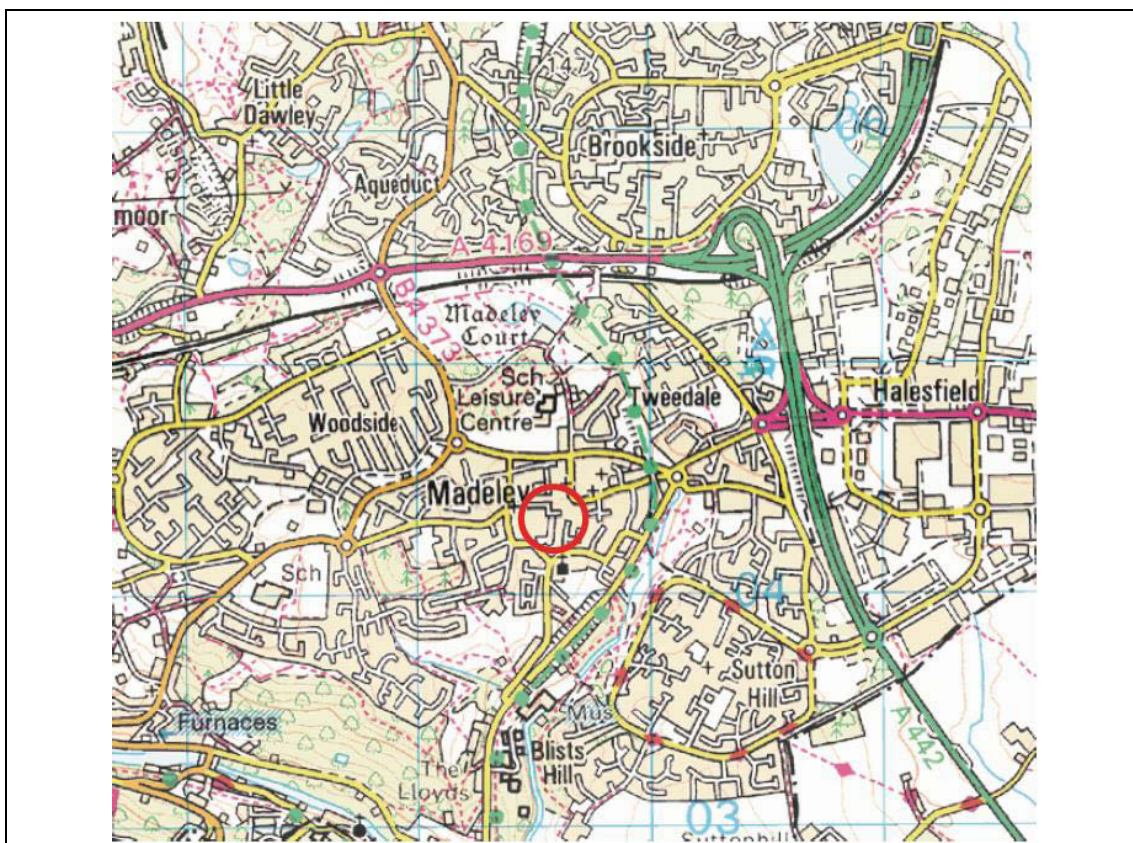


Figure 1: Location of site.

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The work was carried out following permission being granted for the demolition of a factory and some retail units on the site (now demolished), in advance of the development of a new Tesco Store and residential buildings. Evidence presented in the desk-based assessment (Chadwick and Heard 2008) suggested that the potential for surviving archaeological deposits was low and that much of the area had been subject to extensive truncation.

Following discussion with Mike Watson, Historic Environment Officer for Shropshire County Council, the evaluation trench was targeted at an area of potential archaeological survival to the east of the Anstice Institute, where shops, residential buildings and storage areas are proposed. A specification (Pugh 2008) detailing how the work would be undertaken was produced by the Archaeological Consultants, CgMs Consulting and approved by the Historic Environment Officer prior to the work on the site commencing.

This report presents the results of the archaeological evaluation by trial trenching and assesses the impact of the proposed development upon any archaeological deposits identified.

Site Topography and Geology

The study site occupies an area of complex solid geology where Westphalian Upper Carboniferous deposits outcrop (IGS 1979).

More detail is provided by the British Geological Survey (Sheet SJ60SE 1:10,000 Series), which shows that the site is underlain by Upper Carboniferous Coal Measure strata comprising the Coalport Formation which comprises mainly sandstones. The solid geology is capped by Glacial Till (Boulder Clay) which varies in thickness from 2m to 3m.

Site investigations provide more specific information about ground conditions and demonstrate that the historical development of the site has resulted in deposits of modern made ground.

The study site occupies an area of undulating land at the centre of Madeley, currently occupied by a shopping precinct, car park and former factory.

The site occupies parts of the southern and eastern facing slopes of a hill which reaches a plateau along Park Avenue. The southern boundary of the site (Church Street) is at 120.7m Above Ordnance Datum (AOD) and from here levels rise in a gentle gradient to Park Avenue at 122.5m AOD. However a site inspection and geotechnical investigations have demonstrated that several parts of the site have been terraced into the slope and others levelled up with deposits of modern Made Ground. In particular, much of the southern half of the site has been occupied by the footprint of a factory and the topography has been modified by 'cut and fill' which has resulted in reduced levels along the western site boundary and fill across the eastern half of the factory footprint (Chadwick and Heard 2008, Pugh 2008).

To the north and north-east of the factory (within an area of car park), the historic

topography appears largely intact, with levels rising slowly to the north to Park Avenue and sloping down to the east towards Church Street at 117.5m AOD. Levels within the Madeley Precinct have been extensively modified, and to the north-east (where High Street turns north) historic levels appear largely intact (at c 118.8 to 119.1m AOD).

Archaeological and Historical Background

An archaeological desk-based assessment of the site was undertaken by CgMs in May 2008 (Chadwick and Heard 2008). The following summarises the findings of the assessment.

The current evidence indicates that the study site has a low potential for most archaeological periods. There is only a single prehistoric find (a flint arrowhead) and no records of Roman finds in the area on the SMR. On this basis the site is likely to have been covered in dense woodland throughout the Prehistoric to Anglo-Saxon period (Dalwood et al 1996, Gelling 1992, 14).

The earliest suggestion of settlement activity at Madeley is thought to occur during the late Saxon period. The location of the Anglo-Saxon settlement focus is not known (Dalwood et al 1996, 7), but may be positioned in the area of St Michaels Church, to the south of the study site. Medieval and Post-Medieval settlement activity may be present across the north of the study site, but 20th century development of a factory, car park and redevelopment has reduced the potential surviving archaeological deposits. Much of this area of archaeological potential is occupied by a Somerfield Supermarket and other shops forming the Madeley Centre, and thus extensive truncation and destruction of archaeological deposits can be predicted.

Aims and Objectives

The objectives of the evaluation were to:

- Clarify the presence/absence and extent of archaeological deposits within the Site, specifically those dating to the Medieval period;
- Identify, within the constraints of the evaluation, the date, character, condition, significance, quality and depth of any surviving remains within the Site;
- Assess the degree of existing impacts to sub-surface horizons and to document the extent of archaeological survival of buried deposits.

Methodology

Codes of Conduct and Standards and Guidance issued by the Institute of Field Archaeologists (IFA) were followed for this Evaluation.



Plate 1: Excavation through overburden

Once the overlying surface of tarmac was removed and the area scanned for services using a CAT Scanner, a single trench 20m in length and 1.80m in width was excavated over the proposed development area (Fig. 2). A toothless ditching bucket on a 360° machine was used under direct archaeological supervision (Plate 1). The area of the trench was limited by present day flood and sewage services which had to be avoided.

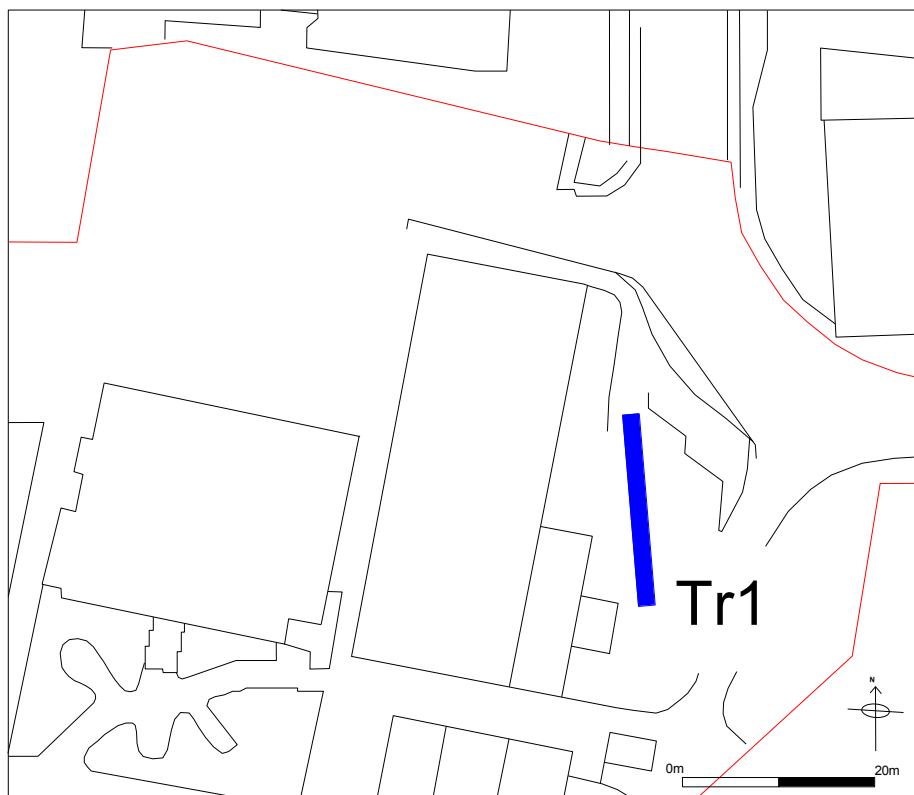


Figure 2: Trench Location (Plan Supplied by CgMs)

Results and Interpretations

The trench was excavated on a North-South alignment to a maximum depth of 1.18m and a minimum of 1.0m and covered a total area of 36sq metres. At the northern end the ground had been made up and redeposited natural substratum was reached (Plate 2). There was no evidence for any surviving archaeological remains. Below the tarmac there was a rubble overburden consisting of demolition debris and hardcore that ran along the whole extent of the trench to a depth of between 0.24 and 0.52m which represents levelling activities across the area (Plates 2 and 3).

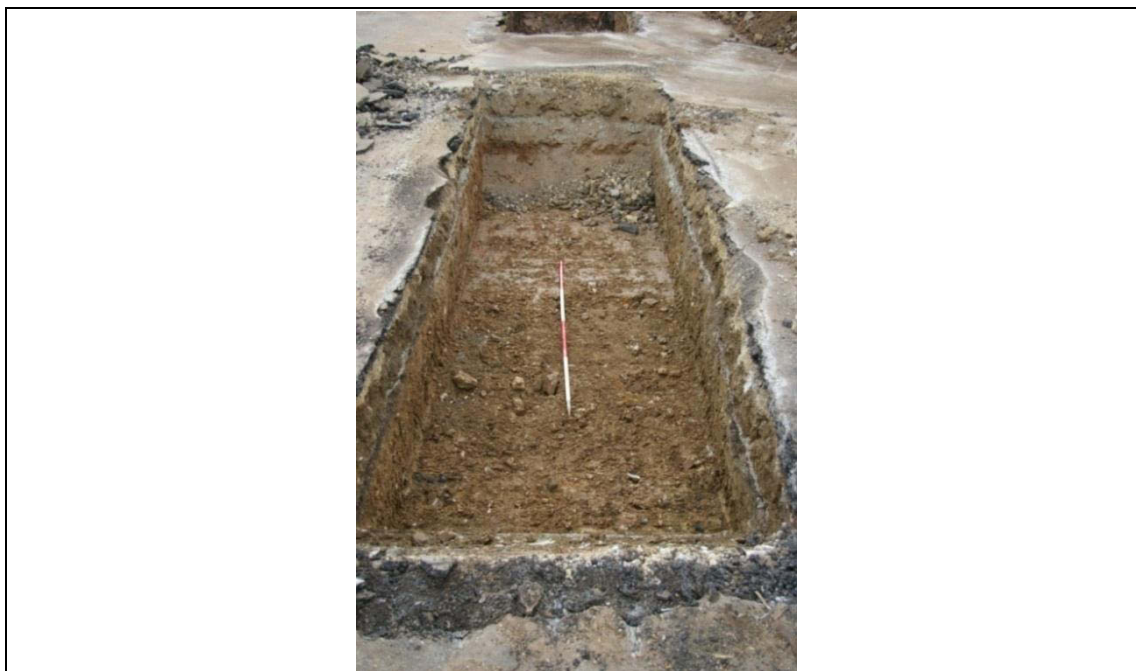


Plate 2: Trench 1 (south end) looking North, 2 metre Scale

A modern intrusion into the made ground was observed approximately 6.0m from the northern end of the trench (Plate 3) that began directly below the overburden levelling layers. This deposit consisted of more building demolition debris and materials in a dark brownish grey silty loam. This deposit continues below the level of the base of the trench and may represent the backfilling of a tank of some description.



Plate 3: Trench 1 (north end) looking North, 2 metre Scale

A sewer pipe was located 7.0m from the southern end of the trench running in a east – west direction and to the south of this the natural substratum of orange-brown boulder clay and sandstone was reached at a depth of 1.0m. As in the northern area of the trench, no archaeological deposits were identified and no significant finds were recovered.

Conclusions

The evaluation by trial trench presents further indications that the proposed development of the area will not have a significant impact on any archaeological remains. The investigation also clarifies the low potential for the survival of archaeological remains in the area and provides evidence for the widespread and extensive modern truncation and 20th century development.

Archive

The site archive will conform to guidelines set down in Appendix 3 of the Management of Archaeological Projects. Telford and Wrekin Accessioning Authority are currently do not provide a facility to deposit archives and so this will be retained by ULAS under the Accession Number TSM 2008. A copy will be sent to the National Monuments Record Centre (NMRC) in Swindon which is maintained by English Heritage.

Acknowledgements

The fieldwork was carried out by Steve Baker and Jamie Patrick and managed by Vicki Score. Thanks also to Mike Watson for his assistance with this project.

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INFORMATION REQUIRED	EXAMPLE
Project Name	An Archaeological Evaluation of Land at Town Square, Madeley, Telford, Shropshire
Project Type	Evaluation
Project Manager	Vicki Score
Project Supervisor	Steve Baker and Jamie Patrick
Previous/Future work	None
Current Land Use	Vacant
Development Type	Residential and Commercial
Reason for Investigation	PPG16
Position in the Planning Process	As a condition
Site Co ordinates	NGR: 36958 30433
Start/end dates of field work	23 rd -24 th September 2008
Archive Recipient	
Study Area *	3.74 hectares

* Particularly important as this information can not be found elsewhere