

MSWB11



MOSELEY SECONDARY SCHOOL, WEST MIDLANDS

Archaeological watching brief

for Lend Lease

2010/07110/PA

January 2012



HEADLAND
ARCHAEOLOGY (UK) Ltd



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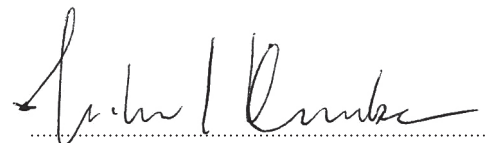
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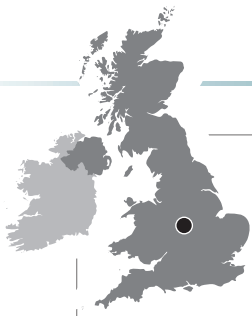
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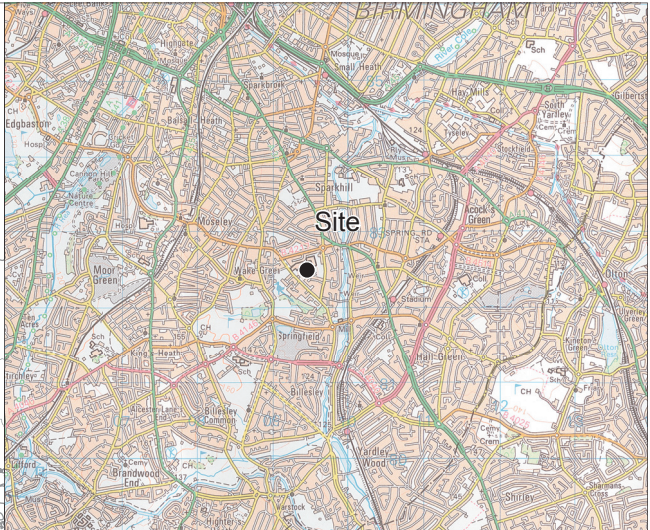
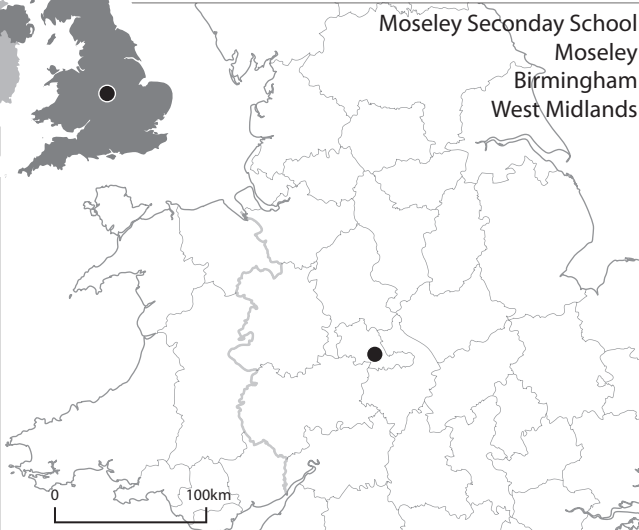
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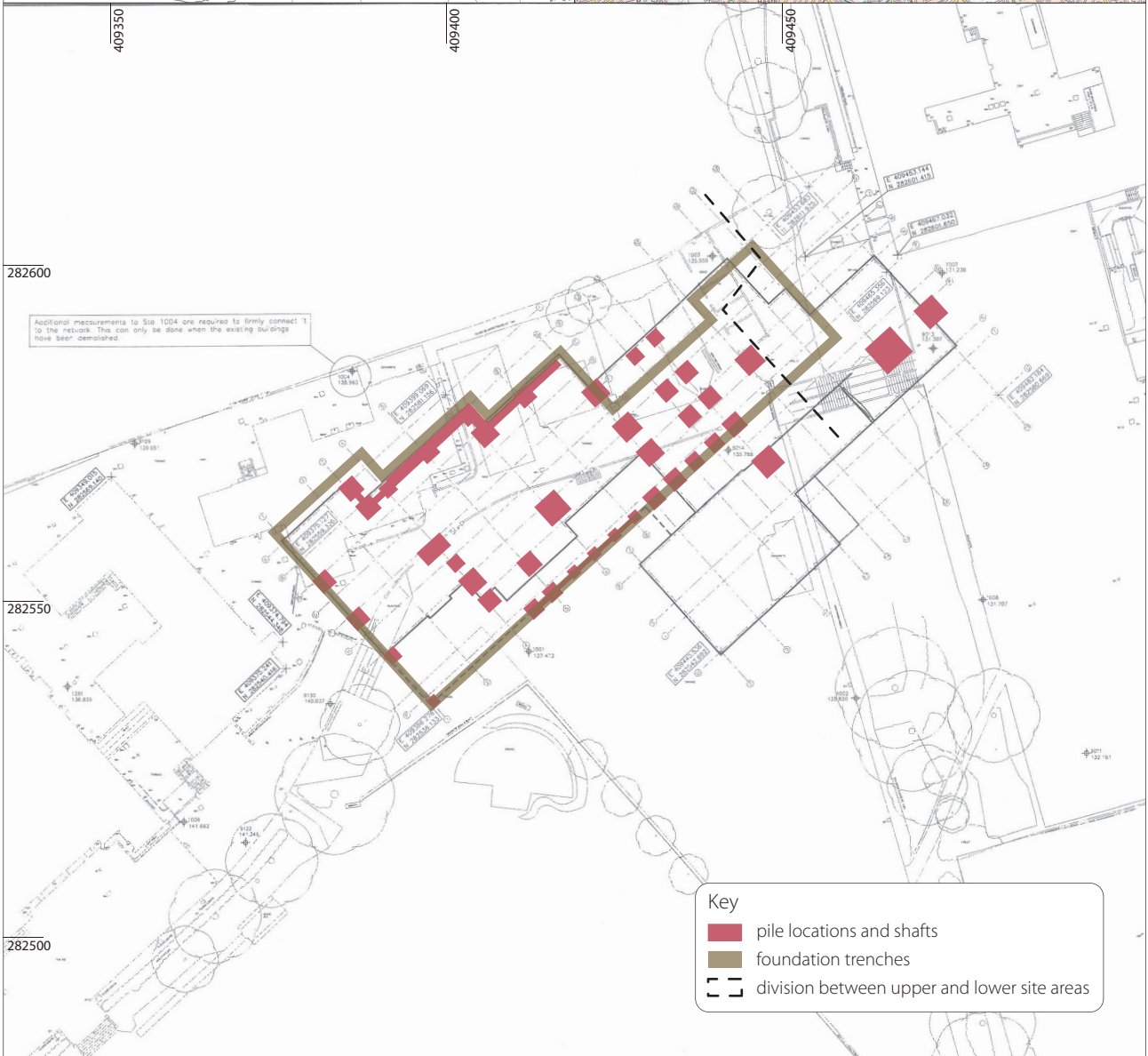
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Moseley Secondary School
Moseley
Birmingham
West Midlands



viii



Key

- pile locations and shafts
- foundation trenches
- division between upper and lower site areas

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Scale 1:1,000 @ A4



Illus 1
Site location

MOSELEY SECONDARY SCHOOL, WEST MIDLANDS

Archaeological Watching brief

Headland Archaeology (UK) Ltd carried out a watching brief at Moseley Secondary School, West Midlands on behalf of Lend Lease. The watching brief was carried as part of a planning condition (Planning reference 2010/07110/PA) given for the redevelopment of the site. The works included the monitoring of groundwork and any associated services. The work revealed that the site may have been previously stripped. A series of 20th century building footings were identified that correspond with the position of the greenhouses on the 1903 Ordnance Survey 2nd Edition map. No archaeology pre-dating the 20th century was uncovered.

1. INTRODUCTION

An archaeological watching brief was carried out by Headland Archaeology (UK) Ltd at Moseley Secondary School, West Midlands. Birmingham City Council has granted planning permission (2010/07110/PA) to the development of the site on the condition that there is a programme of archaeological works as there was the potential for archaeological remains to survive within the site boundary. The project was conducted in accordance with a Written Scheme of Investigation (Boucher, A. 2011) agreed with the Local Planning Authority’s archaeological adviser.

The site encompassing 7.2ha occupies a plot of land between College Road, Springfield Road and Wake Green Road in Moseley, Birmingham (site centre SP09448252) (Illus 1).

The site is bounded to the north by properties on the south side of College Road and Pickwick Grove. The east and south of the site is bounded by residential housing and allotments, and the west of the site is bounded by Wake Green Road.

The application site is discussed as two distinct areas (Illus 1). The ‘upper site’ refers to the area encompassing Spring Hill College and the cricket pitch, whilst the ‘lower site’ refers to the 20th century school buildings to the east. There is a clear change in level between the sites. From the lower site, the upper site is reached via two flights of steps approximately 4 metres in height.

The underlying solid geology of the site is believed to be Mercia Mudstone of the New Red Sandstone period. The drift geology is undated sands and gravels.

1.1 Planning and archaeological background

In 2009 the site was being considered for development. The plans included demolishing the buildings on the lower site to create a physical education campus and car park. A new building was planned for the upper site. A desk-based assessment (Craddock-Bennett, 2009) was carried out and was submitted with the planning application. Birmingham City Council granted planning permission for the development of the site on the condition that there was a programme of archaeological works (the current stage of work) as there was the potential for survival of archaeological remains within the site boundary.

The documentary study identified the archaeological potential of the application site and the results are as follows;

| Archaeological period | Archaeological potential |
|-----------------------|--------------------------|
| Bronze Age | High/Very High |
| Iron Age | Medium |
| Medieval | Low/Medium |
| Post-medieval | Low |
| Modern | Very Low |

This study concluded that there was a high to very high potential for Bronze Age archaeology within the application site. This was due to the proximity of Bronze Age mounds. The burnt mounds of Moseley bog (SMR 02263 and SMR 20623) that date from about 1500 to 1000 BC are situated approximately 300m to the south of the application site. Also in proximity to the site boundary was



2

Illus 2

General view of excavations looking east from the upper site

a potential Iron Age earthwork (SMR 20270) which was ploughed out in the 1820s. (For a detailed archaeological background see Craddock-Bennett, 2009).

The archaeological survival, however, was thought likely to have been compromised due to gravel extraction and remodelling of the landscape for the construction of school buildings on the site.

2. OBJECTIVES

The aim of the project was to ensure that any features of archaeological or historic significance affected by the ground works were adequately recorded and reported.

Specifically this was monitoring all ground disturbances associated with the redevelopment of the site with a view to ultimately producing a report on the findings and depositing the archive with the local repository.

3. METHOD

The monitored ground works comprised ground reduction, the excavation of post-holes for the fence erection, excavation of footings and shafts for lifts and associated services. Demolition/dismantling of existing structures were not continually monitored.

Excavation was undertaken by mechanical excavator equipped with a flat-bladed bucket where possible, although hard surfaces and highly compacted deposits did to require the use of a concrete breaker and toothed bucket in order to remove them.

Mechanical excavation took place under direct archaeological supervision. Mechanical excavation was halted when necessary to allow the archaeologist to investigate or record potential features. Excavation and recording of archaeological features or deposits was rapidly undertaken by hand.



◀ Illus 3

20th century foundations that may represent the greenhouse visible on the 1903 OS 2nd edition

The ground level was reduced to accommodate the building footprint (Illus 1) and a retaining wall on the north of the upper site. The profile revealed a geological deposit comprised of mottled reddish orange sandy clay which continued to the full depth on excavations (Illus 2). This was overlain by a made up dark deposit (106) up to 0.6m and in some places was topped with very shallow topsoil. On the west of the site there was a redeposited geological deposit (105) above (106). On the northeast of the upper site excavations revealed a series of 20th century red brick

footings with 20th century fill approximately 0.2m below the ground surface (Illus 3). These footings indicated the presence of four structures running northwest–southeast for 1.75m.

The lower site revealed the same sequence of deposits as the upper site (Illus 4). Some 19th–20th drainage and an inspection chamber were uncovered. There was an abundance of 20th glass and ceramics within the topsoil of this area. No archaeology was identified.

3

3.1 Recording

All recording followed standard archaeological guidelines as set out by the Institute for Archaeologists (IfA) and Headland recording procedures. All contexts were given unique numbers. All recording was undertaken on *pro forma* record cards that conform to accepted archaeological norms. Plans of the areas disturbed during the watching brief were drawn on at appropriate scale. An overall site plan was provided by the client and areas of ground disturbance were illustrated on this plan. Selected sections were also drawn at 1:10.

Photographs of the excavated areas were taken using 35mm monochrome and colour slide film. Digital photographs on a 7.2mp digital camera were taken for illustrative purposes. Registers were kept for context records, photographs and drawings. All trenches were tied into features shown on the Ordnance Survey 1:2500 mapping.

4.2 Footings

A sequence of 40 footings was excavated on site within the building footprint across the two sites and to the east, south and west. The dimensions of these varied but maximum was 4.2m x 4.2m x 1.9m and the minimum was

4. RESULTS

4.1 Fence erection and ground reductions

A series of post-holes which were on average 0.4m x 0.5m x 0.9m were excavated around the site boundary for the erection of a security fence. These post-holes revealed only some disturbed ground and sterile orange sand. No archaeological features were identified.

Illus 4 ▶

Ground reduction excavations in the terraced ground from the upper site to the lower site





◀ Illus 5

Excavated footing showing soil profile

footings for the greenhouses that are visible on the Ordnance Survey 2nd edition 1903.

The lack of any clear subsoil and the modern layers directly above the sterile geological deposits indicates that the site was previously stripped.

The presence of redeposited geological deposits in the west of the site may be attributed to 19th and 20th century work relating to the current school buildings. The prevalence of modern glass, ceramic and domestic waste indicates that the existing topsoil may have been imported and would support

the evidence for earlier site clearance. This may have occurred during the construction or remodelling of the school in the 19th to late 20th century. This process has likely removed any archaeology that was present on the site.

1.3m x 1.3m x 0.6m. They revealed the same sequence of deposits as seen around the site with shallow topsoil (103) and a modern layer (106 and 107) of varying depth up to 1.0m onto a sterile geological deposit (Illus 5). In some areas a redeposited geological deposit was above 106 and 107 at the west. No archaeology was identified.

4 5. DISCUSSION

The monitoring of the ground works did not reveal any archaeology pre-dating the 20th century within the site application area.

The red brick structures identified at the northeast of the upper site are likely to have been the remnants of the

6. REFERENCES

- IfA 2007 *Archaeological Archives Forum Archaeological Archives: a guide to best practice in creation, compilation, transfer and curation.*
- Craddock-Bennett, L 2009 *Moseley Secondary School, West Midlands. Archaeological Desk-based assessment, HAS 839.*

7. APPENDICES

Appendix 1 – Site registers

Context register

| Context no. | Location | Description | Dimensions |
|-------------|------------------------------------|--|---------------------------------|
| 100 | Upper site, post-holes | Tarmac | Across site Up to 0.30m |
| 101 | Upper site, lower site, post-holes | Disturbed ground. Mottled black and orange silty sands. Some areas contained a denser black clinker like deposit | Across site Max depth was 1m |
| 102 | Upper site, lower site | Sterile geological deposit. Orange and red mottled sands with frequent pebble stone inclusions. | Across site |
| 103 | Upper site, lower site | Topsoil. Modern. Very dark grey-black sandy loam. Modern inclusion of CBM, glass, metals and plastics. Very loose compaction | Across site ~0.40m deep |
| 104 | Post-holes | Topsoil interface layer above 102. Grey to orange silty sand with root disturbance | ~0.4 x 0.4 x 0.9m |
| 105 | Upper site, lower site | Same as 103 | Across site |
| 106 | Upper site, lower site | Modern black silty deposit. Containing cbm, glass, ceramics and other 20th century debris | 80 x 30 x 1.2m |
| 107 | Upper site, footings | Redeposited geological deposit. Same make up 102. | 3 x 2 x 0.4m |

Drawing register

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| Drawing no. | Section | Plan | Description |
|-------------|---------|-------------|------------------------------------|
| 1 | – | Sketch | Rough plan of fencing path |
| 2 | 1:10 | – | Post-hole in overspill car park |
| 3 | 1:10 | – | Post-hole in sports field |
| 4 | – | 1:100 at A0 | Annotated developer plan |
| 5 | – | Sketch | Approximate location of early work |

Photographic register

| Photo no. | C/S | B&W/P | Digital | Direction | Description |
|-----------|-----|-------|---------|-----------|---|
| 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | – | Film ID |
| 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | SE | General. Fencing erected in overspill car park |
| 3 | – | – | 3 | S | General. Fencing erected in overspill car park |
| 4 | 3 | 3 | 4 | SW | Post-hole in overspill carpark (SE-NW run) Post in. |
| 5 | – | – | 5 | NW | Post-hole section |
| 6 | 4 | 4 | 6 | SE | Post-hole section |
| 7 | – | – | 7 | – | Fencing progress in overspill carpark |
| 8 | 5 | 5 | 8 | W | Building B. To be demolished |



6

| Photo no. | C/S | B&W/P | Digital | Direction | Description |
|-----------|-----|-------|---------|-----------|---|
| 9 | 6 | 6 | 9 | W | Area to rear of building B where ground level will be reduced |
| 10 | – | – | 10 | NE | Area to rear of building B where ground level will be reduced |
| 11 | 7 | 7 | 11 | NE | Post-hole section in SW-NE run in overspill car park |
| 12 | – | – | 12 | NE | Post-hole section in SW-NE run in overspill car park |
| 13 | – | – | 13 | NE | Post-hole section in SW-NE run in overspill car park |
| 14 | – | – | 14 | W | Fencing in progress at north most door of main school |
| 15 | – | – | 15 | E | Fence erection in overspill carpark |
| 16 | 8 | 8 | 16 | N | Working shot. North most school door |
| 17 | – | – | 17 | S | Working shot. Overspill carpark |
| 18 | 9 | 9 | 18 | E | Post-hole section in sports field (east corner) |
| 19 | – | – | 19 | E | Post-hole section in sports field (east corner) |
| 20 | – | – | 20 | S | Post-hole section in sports field (east corner) |
| 21 | – | – | 21 | – | Fencing in progress. Sports field boundary |
| 22 | – | – | 22 | S | Fencing in progress. Sports field boundary |
| 23 | – | – | 23 | – | Site as seen on Monday 12th July 2011. Was this area monitored? |
| 24 | – | – | 24 | – | Site as seen on Monday 12th July 2011. Was this area monitored? |
| 25 | – | – | 25 | – | Site as seen on Monday 12th July 2011. Was this area monitored? |
| 26 | – | – | 26 | – | Site as seen on Monday 12th July 2011. Was this area monitored? |
| 27 | 10 | 10 | 27 | SW | Area of excavations on 13–14 July |
| 28 | 11 | 11 | 28 | W | Area of excavations on 13–14 July |
| 29 | 12 | 12 | 29 | W | Area of excavations on 15 July |
| 30 | 13 | 13 | 30 | N | Building footprints 20th century |
| 31 | – | – | 31 | SW | Test pit for water level at the east |
| 32 | – | – | 32 | W | Test pit for water level at the east |
| 33 | 14 | 14 | 33 | W | East facing section at west of building footprint |
| 34 | 15 | 15 | 34 | E | General working shot |
| 35 | 16 | 16 | 35 | N | Early building remains at north east of the site |
| 36 | 17 | 17 | 36 | NE | Early building remains at north east of the site |
| 37 | 18 | 18 | 37 | N | Surface reduction at lower site |
| 38 | 19 | 19 | 38 | W | Deep excavation at lower site for lift shafts and bases |
| 39 | – | – | 39 | SE | Backed filled test pit for water level |
| 40 | – | – | 40 | E | South end of inspection chamber for drain, pipe exposed |
| 41 | – | – | 41 | E | Inspection chamber for drainage. Excavated to expose pipe |
| 42 | – | – | 42 | W | Section of deep excavation |
| 43 | – | – | 43 | NW | Pits 1 and 2 excavated and backfilled |
| 44 | – | – | 44 | W | Pit 1 excavated to sterile deposits and backfilled |
| 45 | – | – | 45 | NW | Pit 2 excavated to sterile deposits and backfilled |
| 46 | – | – | 46 | E | excavation of a 1.50m square at SW of site |
| 47 | – | – | 47 | NE | Area at NW end of the site near to the fence |

| Photo no. | C/S | B&W/P | Digital | Direction | Description |
|-----------|-----|-------|---------|-----------|--|
| 48 | - | - | 48 | SE | NW of footings dig |
| 49 | - | - | 49 | N | Concrete footings. Plan grid E10, J10 |
| 50 | - | - | 50 | SE | Concrete footing. Plan grid J10 |
| 51 | - | - | 51 | E | Concrete footings. Plan grid E10, E12 on foundation plan |
| 52 | - | - | 52 | NE | West facing section of footing J10 |
| 53 | - | - | 53 | NE | West facing section of footing J10 |
| 54 | - | - | 54 | W | Section of footing E12 |
| 55 | - | - | 55 | W | Working shot at west of site |
| 56 | - | - | 56 | NE | Working shot of footings A3 B3 |
| 57 | - | - | 57 | W | Working shot of footings A3 B3 |
| 58 | - | - | 58 | E | Concrete footing B4 |
| 59 | - | - | 59 | E | Already completed strip on south edge of site |
| 60 | - | - | 60 | - | excavation of foundation |
| 61 | - | - | 61 | E | Continuation of footing at north edge of site |
| 62 | - | - | 62 | W | East facing section in footing C6 |
| 63 | - | - | 63 | NE | General working shot of foundations |
| 64 | - | - | 64 | N | Section of footing |
| 65 | - | - | 65 | N | Footings H4 and K4 |
| 66 | - | - | 66 | SE | Footings at east of site already filled |
| 67 | - | - | 67 | S | Section of footing at east of site. P13 |
| 68 | - | - | 68 | E | Section of footing P1 at west of site |
| 69 | - | - | 69 | E | General working shot |
| 70 | - | - | 70 | E | West facing section of P1. Square base |
| 71 | - | - | 71 | E | West facing section of C1. Square base |
| 72 | 20 | 20 | - | N | General shot at west of site |
| 73 | 21 | 21 | - | N | General shot at west of site |
| 74 | 22 | 22 | - | E | General shot across site |





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