

RFGT10



ROTHERWAS FUTURES CONNECT PHASE 2

Archaeological Field Evaluation and Test Pit Monitoring

for Amey Consulting (on behalf of Herefordshire Council)

July 2011

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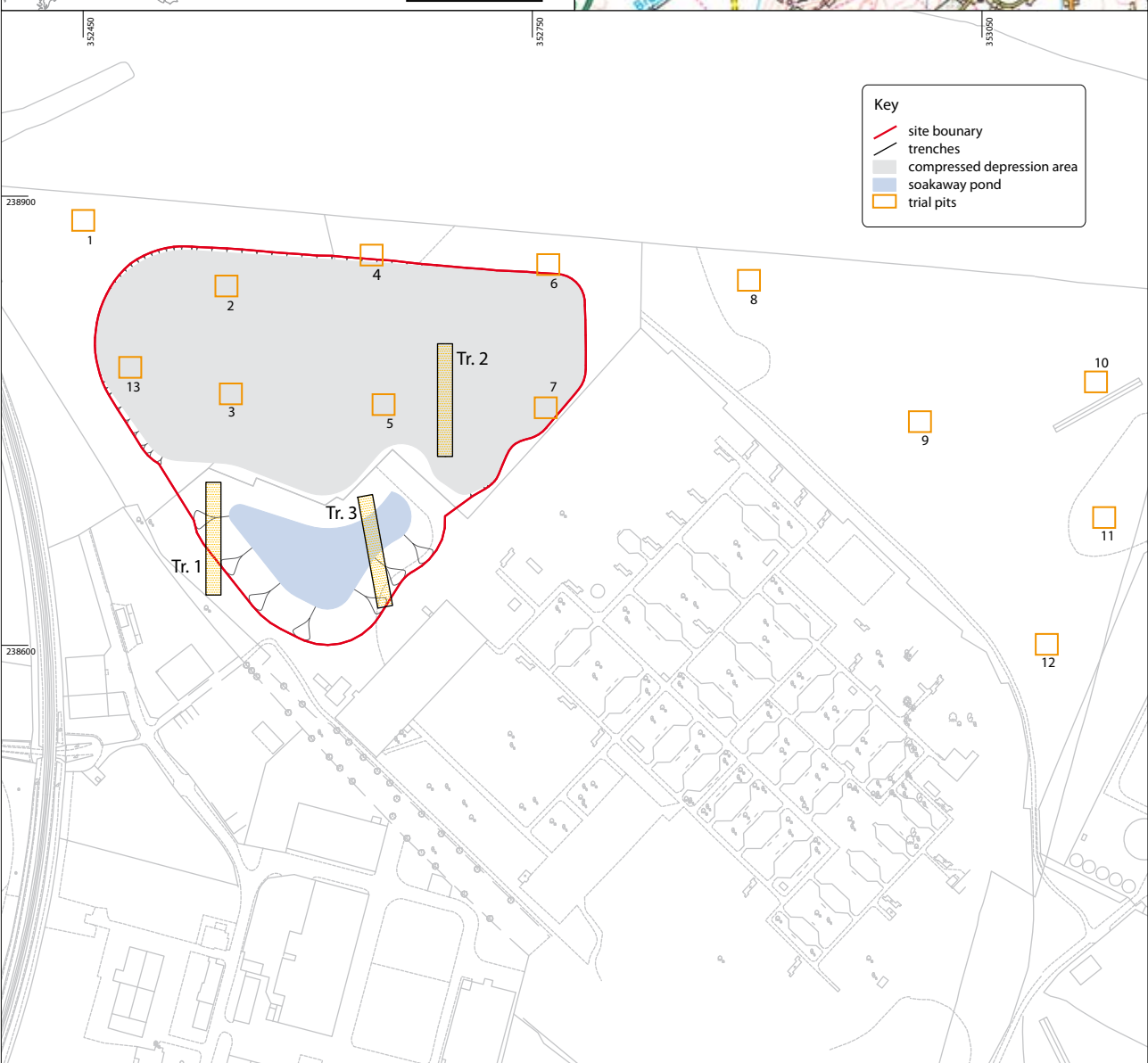
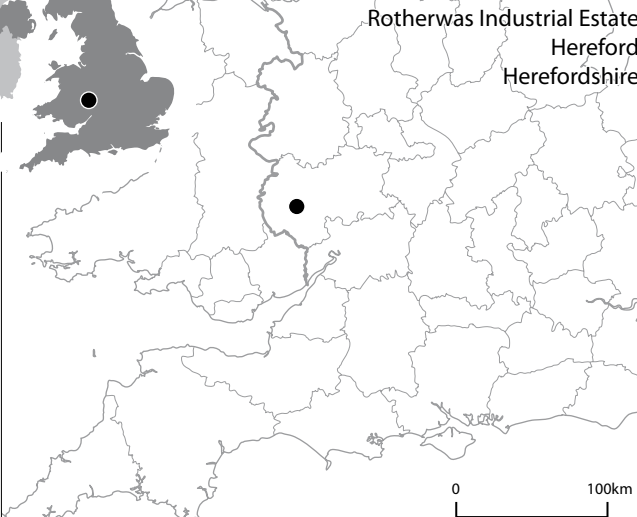
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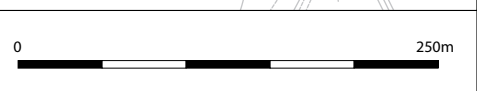


Rotherwas Industrial Estate
Hereford
Herefordshire



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Illus 1
Site location and trench plan

ROTHERWAS FUTURES CONNECT PHASE 2

Archaeological Field Evaluation and Test Pit Monitoring

An archaeological watching brief monitoring geotechnical test-pitting, related to the flood remediation works associated with the Rotherwas Futures Connect 2 Flood Alleviation Scheme was conducted by Headland Archaeology (UK) Limited in February 2011.

Further evaluation work was conducted on the 19th of April 2011 again by Headland Archaeology (UK) Limited, this involved an archaeological evaluation, comprising of the excavation of three trenches (1.8m x 75.0m), (NGR: SO 52780 38820) within the area surrounding vicinity of a flood alleviation pond

The lack of any archaeological remains being observed within the limits of the evaluation trenches, in comparison to the depths of the gravel horizon indicates that the area associated with the former military development has under gone much alteration

The lack of any archaeological remains being observed during this phase of works does not necessarily indicate that the area of the development can be taken as archaeologically sterile, due to the dispersed characteristics of prehistoric remains, which as demonstrated during previous works conducted on the Rotherwas site can be ephemeral in their nature.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Amey Consulting is acting on behalf of Herefordshire Council, in respect of a planning application for the installation of a flood alleviation pond relating to the development of the former Rotherwas Armory site. The planning authority requested an assessment of the impact on the significance of any previously unknown heritage assets within the footprint of the proposed scheme. This was to be achieved by means of a field evaluation.

An archaeological watching brief monitoring geotechnical test-pitting, related to the flood remediation works associated with the Rotherwas Futures Connect 2 Flood Alleviation Scheme was conducted by Headland Archaeology (UK) Ltd in February 2011.

Further evaluation work was conducted on the 19th of April and 30th June 2011, this involved an evaluation by trial trench, comprising of the excavation of three trenches (1.8m x 75m), (NGR: SO 52780 38820) within the area of the flood alleviation pond.

The work was carried out in line with a project design agreed with the planning authority (Craddock-Bennett 2011).

2. SITE DESCRIPTION

The site lies approximately 1600m to the N-W of the “South magazine”, a now largely demolished military armaments factory. An evaluation was carried out in the area known as the south magazine, in 2008 (Craddock-Bennett 2008) by Archaeological Investigations Limited, this subsequently led to the excavation of a prehistoric archaeological site by Worcestershire Archaeology Service.

The Rotherwas area also contains evidence of past prehistoric and medieval settlement including a deserted medieval village to the east of the site, and the post-medieval Rotherwas Manor and its designed gardens to the east of the flood remediation area (Robinson 2001).

Currently the site has been cleared of vegetation and any military structures that once occupied the site boundary have been demolished. The site is open ground and gently slopes down towards the River Wye in the north. The area around the vicinity of the third trench, was under crop immediately prior to the evaluation.

The proposed pond is designed to surround a range of brick buildings, formerly picric acid stores. The most westerly of these buildings is listed.



The site is geologically located on river terrace deposits overlying the Raglan Mudstone Formation (BGS 1990).

3. OBJECTIVES

The objectives of the project were to ascertain whether any archaeological remains were present within the area of the proposed development, characterise them by date, extent, preservation, and significance. The combined information assembled during the geotechnical test pitting and the evaluation work will make it possible to establish the potential impact of the proposed flood alleviation scheme upon the significance of any archaeological remains present.

4. METHOD

4.1 Geotechnical trial pit monitoring

2 The excavation of the test pits, 13 in total, was undertaken by mechanical excavator equipped with a toothless bucket. A toothed bucket was used when more compact non-archaeological layers were encountered within sterile geological deposits. An archaeologist monitored the test pits during the excavation phase.

4.2 Evaluation

The evaluation comprised of the excavation of two trenches, each 75m in length, through the principal area of the balancing pond. The trenches were originally orientated on a north south alignment; permission was sought and gained from Herefordshire County Council Archaeology to rotate the trenches around the desired centre points in order to avoid previous boreholes and a very large spoil heap.

Centre points of the trenches:

- Trench 1 – SO 5252 3881
- Trench 2 – SO 5272 3881
- Trench 3 – SO 5306 3872

Excavation of the evaluation trenches was undertaken using a mechanical excavator equipped with a toothless bucket. All mechanical excavation was under direct supervision of an archaeologist. The excavated trenches were closely examined for any features and the spoil was re-examined in order to collect any artifacts.

4.3 Recording

All recording followed *IfA* Standards and Guidance. A plan of evaluation trenches and features encountered were maintained at a scale of 1:100 and has been tied to the National Grid.

Trial holes and evaluation trenches were photographed with graduated metric scales and include 35mm colour transparencies, black & white prints and digital photographs.

5. RESULTS

5.1 Geotechnical test-pits

The geotechnical test pits were approximately 4m in length, 0.90m wide and varied between 3.4m and 4m in depth. Sterile geological deposits were encountered at an average of 0.65m below the current ground surface. Test pit depths and profiles are given in Appendix 1.

No archaeological remains were observed.



Illus 2
Excavation of Trench 1



Illus 3
Evaluation of Trench 2

5.2 Trial trenching

Trench 1

Trench 1 was located towards the north-west edge of the flood alleviation pond and measured approximately 75m in length. The trench was excavated to an average depth of 0.40m below present ground level, at which point a natural gravel horizon was observed. The gravel horizon gently sloped towards the north end of the trench. Above the gravel horizon, the makeup of the site consisted of a red-brown silty subsoil beneath the current topsoil. The topsoil within the limits of the evaluation consisted of building debris, associated with the current phase of site and vegetation clearance. No archaeological remains were observed.

Trench 2

Trench 2 was located away from the area of the alleviation pond towards the north east of the site. The area was under crop at the time of the evaluation and care was taken to minimise the damage by repositioning the trench to the southern edge of the field.

The trench was excavated to a maximum depth of 0.65m, whereupon sterile geological deposits were encountered at an average of 0.45m below the current ground surface. No archaeological remains were observed.

Trench 3

Trench 3 was located towards the north east of the flood alleviation pond, this area had

been levelled and cleared of vegetation before the evaluation trenches were excavated. The trench was excavated to an approximate depth of 0.4m below present ground level and in all respects mirrored that of Trench 1, apart from the modern intrusion of services associated with the former military structures. No archaeological remains were observed.

6. DISCUSSION

The pond area did appear to have been disturbed to some extent by previous activity on the former armoury site, and building debris in the overburden suggests that part this area – excluding the area under crop – may have been previously stripped.

The depth of the topsoil observed in the geotechnical test-pits, compared with that observed in the evaluation trenches, indicates that clearance and demolition works in the pond areas reduced the ground level by approximately 0.25m prior to the evaluation taking place. However, this activity does not appear to have had a significant impact on the (potential) archaeological horizon.

It is unlikely that significant or large-scale archaeological remains are present within the proposed pond area. The lack of any archaeological remains being observed during this phase of works does not necessarily indicate that the area of the development can be assumed to be archaeologically sterile, but any remains that are present would be likely to be small-scale and of minor significance.

The effect of the proposed works on the significance of any previously unknown archaeological remains in this development area is predicted to be negligible.



Illus 4
West facing section of Trench 3



7. REFERENCES

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- Watt, S, 2011, *The Archaeology of the West Midlands, A Framework for Research*, Oxbow books on behalf of The University of Birmingham.
- Worcestershire County Council, 2008, *Assessment and Updated Project Design for the Rotherwas Access Road, Herefordshire*.

8. APPENDICES

8.1 Appendix 1 – Site registers

Log of trial pit depths

Trench no.	Depth of natural below current ground level (m)
1	0.8
2	0.9
3	0.7
4	0.9
5	1.35
6	1.2
7	0.95
8	1.3
9	1.15
10	1.5
11	0.85
12	1.5
13	1.25

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Trench register

Trench no.	Dimensions (m)	Description	Description	Contexts
1	1.8 x 75 x 0.45	Trench 1 lay in the eastern side of the site. The only features present were modern services associated with the previous military establishment.	ground surface: subsoil: natural subsoil:	[100] [101] [102]
2	1.8 x 75 x 0.65	Aligned approximately N/S the trench lay to the W of Trench 1 and Trench 2, out side of the area affected by the excavation of the flood alleviation pond development. The trench was excavated to a greater depth than both trenches 1 & 3 due to the fact that the site had not been stripped and levelled. The only features present were modern services associated with the previous military establishment. The only deposits in the trench were the topsoil, subsoil and the natural gravels.	ground surface: subsoil: natural subsoil:	[200] [201] [202]
3	1.8 x 75 x 0.45	Trench 3 was positioned E of Trench 1 and aligned approximately NW/SE, the repositioning of this trench around its predefined location was taken in order to avoid the large spoil heap that had resulted from the clearance of the site prior to excavation. Beneath the topsoil, subsoil was the natural deposit of reddish and gravel.	ground surface: subsoil: natural subsoil:	[300] [301] [302]



Photographic register

Photo no.	B&W	Colour slide	Digital	Facing	Description
1	Y	Y	Y	N	Trench 1, during excavation
2	Y	Y	Y	N	Trench 1, during excavation
3	Y	Y	Y	N	Trench 1, during excavation
4	Y	Y	Y	W	Trench 3, section
5	Y	Y	Y	W	Trench 3, section
6	-	-	Y	N	Trench 2, before excavation
7	-	-	Y	N	Trench 2, before excavation
8	-	-	Y	N	Trench 2, before excavation
9	-	-	Y	N	Trench 2, before excavation
10	-	-	Y	N	Trench 2, before excavation
11	-	-	Y	N	Trench 2, before excavation
12	-	-	Y	N	Trench 2, before excavation
13	-	-	Y	N	Trench 2, before excavation
14	-	-	Y	N	Trench 2, before excavation
15	-	-	Y	N	Trench 2, before excavation
16	-	-	Y	N	Trench 2, before excavation
17	-	-	Y	N	Trench 2, before excavation
18	-	-	Y	N	Trench 2, before excavation
19	-	-	Y	N	Trench 2, before excavation
20	-	-	Y	N	Trench 2, before excavation
21	-	-	Y	S	Trench 2, during excavation
22	-	-	Y	N	Trench 2, excavation of sondage
23	-	-	Y	N	Trench 2, excavation of sondage
24	-	-	Y	N	Trench 2, excavation of sondage
25	-	-	Y	S	Trench 2, modern service
26	Y	Y	Y	E	Trench 2, Section
27	Y	Y	Y	E	Trench 2, Section
28	Y	Y	Y	E	Trench 2, Section
29	Y	Y	Y	E	Trench 2, Section
30	-	-	Y	S	Trench 2, modern service
31	-	-	Y	N	Trench 2, modern service
32	-	-	Y	N	Trench 2, modern service
33	Y	Y	Y	S	Trench 2, after excavation
34	Y	Y	Y	S	Trench 2, after excavation
35	Y	Y	Y	S	Trench 2, after excavation
36	-	-	Y	N	Trench 2, after excavation
37	-	-	Y	N	Trench 2, after excavation
38	-	-	Y	N	Trench 2, after excavation
39	-	-	Y	N	Trench 2, after excavation

Photo no.	B&W	Colour slide	Digital	Facing	Description
40	-	-	Y	N	Trench 2, after excavation
41	-	-	Y	N	Trench 2, after excavation
42	-	-	Y	N	Trench 2, after excavation
43	-	-	Y	N	Trench 2, after excavation
44	-	-	Y	N	Trench 2, after excavation
45	-	-	Y	N	Trench 2, after excavation
46	Y	Y	Y	N	Trench 3, during excavation



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