

TMWH11



THE MERTON WORKS

Archaeological Watching Brief

for Idyllic Homes

DMS/112052/F

September 2012

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Project Manager

Mike Kimber

Author

Simon Mayes

Fieldwork

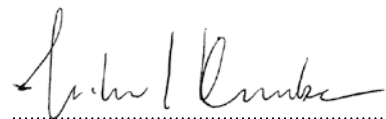
Simon Mayes

Graphics

Caroline Norrman

Approved by

Mike Kimber – Project Manager



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Midlands & West

Headland Archaeology
Unit 1, Premier Business Park, Faraday Road
Hereford HR4 9NZ
01432 364 901
hereford@headlandarchaeology.com

www.headlandarchaeology.com

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The Merton Works
Canal Lane
Hereford



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Scale 1:500 @ A4



0 25m

Illus 1
Site location

THE MERTON WORKS

Archaeological Watching Brief

Idyllic Homes Ltd commissioned Headland Archaeology (UK) Ltd to conduct an archaeological watching brief during the excavation of footings for the construction of a new housing development. (Ref: DMS/112052/F)

The groundworks consisted of the excavation of a series of footings approximately 0.50m wide to a depth of 0.60m, following the submitted design.

Within in the footprint of the new buildings no archaeological features or previously unknown heritage assets were identified. Excavation of the footings relating to the extension associated with the existing building produced evidence for a backfilled cellar, possibly relating to the existing building. The nature of the features observed indicated that the area has only been subject to relatively modern development, therefore, it is considered unlikely that any significant archaeological assets were present within the development area.

The absence of archaeological remains within the footings could indicate that this area was previously garden plots associated with buildings relating to Commercial Road.

1

1. INTRODUCTION

Headland Archaeology (UK) Ltd acting on behalf of Idyllic Homes Ltd, conducted a ground monitoring exercise in respect of a planning consent granted for the construction of a new housing development at land to the rear of Commercial road, Hereford, Herefordshire, formally known as The Merton Works (a builders yard), (Ref: DMS/112052/F), (NGR: SO 513403).

Hereford County Council granted planning permission for the development on the condition that the applicant implemented a programme of archaeological works in accordance with the Written Scheme of Investigation.

Herefordshire Archaeology issued a brief requiring an archaeological watching brief during the principal ground-disturbing operations (ref. b112052s2). The project was carried out in line with a Written Scheme of Investigation agreed with the planning authority (Kimber 2012). The watching brief was conducted during the month of April 2012, the monitored works encompassed the excavation of footings for the new build and the extension to the existing building within the boundary of the development site (*Illus 1*).

2. SITE DESCRIPTION

The site lies to the south east of Commercial Road and is bounded to the west by the late 18th century cemetery of the parish of St Peter and to the north by Canal Street. Prior to development the site contained numerous red brick and steel framed buildings, associated with its former occupation.

The underlying geology is reported as Raglan Mudstone Formation – Siltstone and Mudstone overlain by glaciofluvial sheet deposits (www.bgs.ac.uk).

3. ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

Examination of the historic mapping shows that the area of development has in general been open land and may once formed the back plot of buildings that fronted Commercial road. Taylor's map of 1757 shows the site was an open area behind a building fronting Bye Street bounded by an orchard to the northeast and some small buildings to the north-west (*Illus 2*).



Illus 2

Detail of Isaac Taylor's map of Hereford (1757) showing the approximate area of the site

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4. OBJECTIVES

The objective of the project was to identify and record any archaeological remains exposed by the principal groundworks, produce a report and deposit the archive with a local repository.

5. METHOD

The monitored works were the excavation of footings for a row of four terrace houses aligned north south and the excavation of footings for an extension to an existing building.

Excavation of the footings was undertaken using a 3 tonne mechanical excavator equipped with a toothless bucket. An archaeologist observed all mechanical excavation.

The excavated footings were examined in detail for any features and the spoil was re-examined in order to collect any artefacts.

2



Illus 3

General view of the site showing the footings for Unit 3, 4 and 5



Illus 4

Detailed view of the in-filled cellar

All recording followed standard archaeological guidelines as set out by the Institute for Archaeologists (IfA). All contexts were given unique numbers. All recording was undertaken on *pro forma* record cards that conform to accepted archaeological norms. All plans of excavations were drawn at 1:500 and were tied into developer site plans. 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 1:2,500 mapping. (Illus 3)



Illus 5

General view of the cellar

6. RESULTS

For the ease of reporting the excavation results, a brief, generalised description of the contexts present in the excavated footings is given in this section.

The general stratigraphic make up the of the site consisted of the demolition remains of the previous structures overlaying a dark grey subsoil deposit containing small rounded pebbles, beneath which a sterile deposit of red gravels was observed (approximately 600mm below present day level) (Illus 4). Excavation of the footings was ceased at this level, as this was regarded by the Building Inspector to be satisfactory for construction.

During excavation of the footings associated with the development of the existing building, evidence was found for a relatively recent backfilled cellar (Illus 5). Material from the cellar contained general demolition debris including galvanised buckets and window glass. The cellar was constructed from red brick with small sandstone blocks forming on wall. The cellar once had a brick constructed barrel vaulted ceiling. Due to the fragile nature and depth of the cellar, entry was considered unsafe and the cellar was recorded during excavation, by a series of photographs.

7. DISCUSSION

Monitoring of the excavated footings has indicated that the site has been subject to minimal human activity and may have been open and undeveloped land until the modern period.

Modern activity such as the construction of the builder's yard may have resulted in the removal of the topsoil and subsequent levelling may have removed any evidence for past activities on the site and could be a significant reason why the area exhibited little in the way of archaeological evidence for occupation.

The buildings recorded on Taylor's map were not observed within the scheme of works and may lie further north or have been removed during the construction of the Merton Works.

The watching brief has established that no significant archaeological assets were disturbed by the construction of the new buildings.

8. REFERENCES

8.1 Bibliography

Archaeological Archives Forum *Archaeological Archives: a guide to best practice in creation, compilation, transfer, and curation*, (published by the IfA 2007).

Kimber, M 2012 *'The Merton Works at canal street, Hereford: Written Scheme of Investigation'*, Headland Archaeology (UK) Ltd.

Institute for Archaeologists 2009 *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Field Evaluation*.

8.2 Cartography

1990 British Geological Survey *Mid Wales & Marches*, 1:250 000 scale map.



9. APPENDICES

Appendix 1 Photographic register

Photo	B/W	C/S	Digital	Direction	Description
1	Y	–	Y	W	Unit 3 footing detail
2	Y	–	Y	S	Section, Unit 3
3	Y	–	Y	W	Unit 3 footing detail
4	Y	–	Y	W	Unit 4 footing detail
5	Y	–	Y	S	Section, Unit 4
6	Y	–	Y	W	Unit 4 footing detail
7	Y	–	Y	S	Section, Unit 4
8	Y	–	Y	S	Unit 3 & 4 footing detail
9	Y	–	Y	W	Section detail Unit 4
10	Y	–	Y	S	Units 3,4 & 5, footing detail
11	Y	–	Y	S	Units 3,4 & 5, footing detail
12	Y	–	Y	E	Unit 5, section detail
13	Y	–	Y	W	Unit 6, footing detail
14	Y	–	Y	S	Unit 6, section detail
15	Y	–	Y	N	Unit 6, footing detail
16	Y	–	Y	E	Unit 6, Section detail
17	Y	–	Y	W	General view of site
18	Y	–	Y	S	General view of site
19	Y	–	Y	N	Unit 1,view of cellar during excavation
20	Y	–	Y	N	Unit 1,view of cellar during excavation
21	Y	–	Y	N	Unit 1,view of cellar during excavation
22	Y	–	Y	W	Unit 1,view of cellar during excavation
23	Y	–	Y	W	Unit 1,view of cellar during excavation
24	Y	–	Y	W	Unit 1,view of cellar during excavation
25	Y	–	Y	W	Unit 1,view of cellar during excavation
26	Y	–	Y	S	Unit 1,view of cellar during excavation
27	Y	–	Y	S	Unit 1,view of cellar during excavation
28	Y	–	Y	S	Unit 1,view of cellar during excavation
29	Y	–	Y	W	Unit 1,view of cellar during excavation
30	Y	–	Y	W	Unit 1 ,view of cellar showing plastic in infill
31	Y	–	Y	W	Unit 1 ,view of cellar showing plastic in infill
32	Y	–	Y	S	Unit 1,view of cellar during excavation
33	Y	–	Y	W	Unit 1,view of cellar during excavation
34	Y	–	Y	W	Unit 1,view of cellar during excavation
35	Y	–	Y	W	Unit 1,view of cellar during excavation



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Midlands & West

Headland Archaeology
Unit 1, Premier Business Park, Faraday Road
Hereford HR4 9NZ
01432 364 901
hereford@headlandarchaeology.com

South & East

Headland Archaeology
Technology Centre, Stanbridge Road
Leighton Buzzard LU7 4QH
01525 850878
leighton.buzzard@headlandarchaeology.com

North East

Headland Archaeology
13 Jane Street
Edinburgh EH6 5HE
0131 467 7705
office@headlandarchaeology.com

North West

Headland Archaeology
10 Payne Street
Glasgow G4 0LF
0141 354 8100
glasgowoffice@headlandarchaeology.com

www.headlandarchaeology.com