

WLCW/01



WEDNESBURY LEISURE CENTRE

Heritage Statement

commissioned by Coleman and Co.

DC/08/50301

January 2014

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Project Manager

Andy Boucher

Author

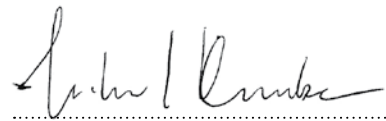
Annie Partridge

Graphics

Caroline Norrman

Approved by

Mike Kimber – Project Manager



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Headland Archaeology
Midlands & West

Unit 1, Premier Business Park, Faraday Road
Hereford HR4 9NZ

01432 364 901
midlandsandwest@headlandarchaeology.com

www.headlandarchaeology.com



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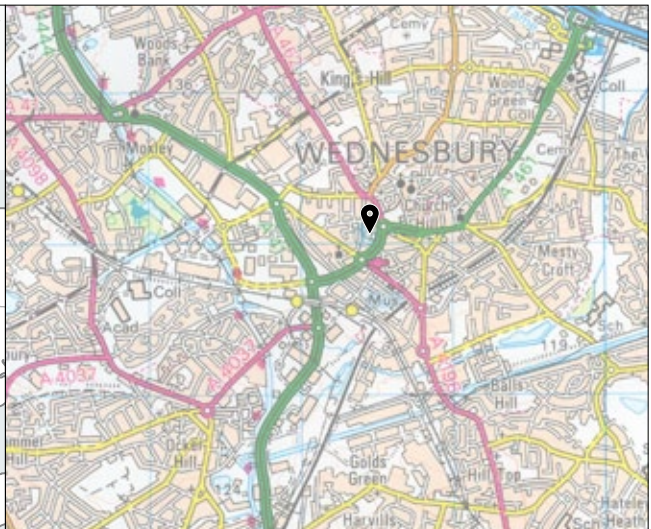
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land at
Wednesbury Leisure Centre
High Bullen
Wednesbury
West Midlands



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scale 1:1,250 @ A4



Illus 1

Site location

WEDNESBURY LEISURE CENTRE

Heritage Statement

This document is an assessment of the likely impacts that a proposed development would have on heritage assets adjacent to Wednesbury Leisure Centre, Sandwell, and was undertaken by Headland Archaeology in January 2014. This takes the form of documentary research, an appraisal of the results from an evaluation undertaken in December 2013, and the results of geotechnical surveys undertaken across the site in October 2013.

Assets that might have been affected by the proposals were a medieval boundary ditch and a 19th century industrial complex (The Crown Tube Works). Due to the presence of modern overburden in excess of 1m across the proposal site, it has been assessed that as long as the car park construction and associated works do not exceed this then there will not be any impact on the significance of heritage assets buried beneath the site.

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Planning background and objectives

This document is an assessment of the site adjacent to Wednesbury Leisure Centre at High Bullen, Wednesbury, Sandwell. The south and west of the site is currently being redeveloped into a new leisure centre and PCT Health Care Scheme respectively, whilst the area described in this report will be for the associated car parks (DC/08/50301).

As part of the planning application process, Headland Archaeology (UK) Ltd was commissioned by Coleman and Co. acting on behalf of Sandwell MBC to assess the impact the proposed development might have upon buried archaeology so as to provide sufficient information to allow consideration of this and future development proposals. The current development plans have a low level of impact and will not exceed 1m in depth. An overview of any deeper assets has been included so as to assist in future development proposals or in cases where current proposed impacts vary.

1.2 Site location, description and setting

The proposed development area comprises land located at NGR SO 39850 295013 (site centre) on the western edge of Wednesbury town centre (Illus 1). The site is located on sloping land (falling generally in a north to south direction) with a grade of approximately 1:30.

The boundaries of the proposed development are as follows:

- to the north a housing development along Meeting Street and a service station;
- to the east Dudley Street/High Bullen (A461);

- to the southwest housing and Wednesbury Fire Station;
- and to the west by derelict land.

Visibility to and from the site is not restricted in any way.

The underlying geology of the site is predominantly Pennine Middle Coal Measures Formation of mudstone, siltstone and sandstone. Sedimentary bedrock formed approximately 309 to 312 million years ago in the Carboniferous Period. Glacial deposits are recorded in the area underlying made ground comprising till/boulder clay and are less than 5m thick.

2 POLICY AND GUIDANCE

2.1 National policy framework

National Planning Policy in England is set out in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) published in March 2012. The NPPF replaced all previous planning policy documents. Planning policy refers to 'heritage assets' and the policies relating to designated heritage assets are intended to apply equally to all types of designation, including Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas. The policies in the NPPF are a material consideration that must be taken into account in development management decisions and in the development of Local Plans, where relevant. Therefore, the development management policies in the NPPF can be applied directly by the decision-maker when determining whether development should proceed.

The NPPF supports a presumption in favour of sustainable development, and sets out the definitions of sustainability including protecting and enhancing the historic environment. P131 of the NPPF states that:

'In determining planning applications, local planning authorities should take account of:

- the desirability of sustaining or enhancing the significance of heritage assets and putting them to viable uses consistent with their conservation;*
- the positive contribution that conservation of heritage assets can make to sustainable communities including their economic vitality; and*
- the desirability of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness'.*

P132 states that *'great weight'* should be given to the conservation of the significance of designated heritage assets and that harm to this significance (either through alteration or destruction of the asset or through development within its setting) requires *'clear and convincing justification'*. The harm or loss needs to be outweighed by the public benefits of the proposed development and *'substantial harm to or loss of a grade II listed building, park or garden should be exceptional. Substantial harm to or loss of designated heritage assets of the highest significance, notably scheduled monuments, protected wreck sites, battlefields, grade I and II* listed buildings, grade I and II* registered parks and gardens, and world heritage sites, should be wholly exceptional'*.

2.2 Local policy framework

The adopted Black Country Core Strategy (February 2011).

ENV2: All development should aim to protect and promote the special qualities, historic character and local distinctiveness of the Black Country in order to help maintain its cultural identity and strong sense of place. Development proposals will be required to preserve and, where appropriate, enhance local character and those aspects of the historic environment together with their settings which are recognised as being of special historic, archaeological, architectural, landscape or townscape quality.

Guidance to help practitioners implement the NPPF, including the legislative requirements that underpin it, is provided in Planning for the Historic Environment Practice Guide (2010).

More recently English Heritage has issued detailed guidance on the Setting of Heritage Assets (2011). This guidance is based on principles and guidance already issued by English Heritage in the Historic Environment Planning Practice Guide (2010), Conservation Principles: Policies and Guidance for the Sustainable Management of the Historic Environment (2008). It provides a framework for assessing impacts based on the identification of individual asset's cultural significance and the relationship between that and its surroundings followed by assessment of the degree to which change in the surroundings affects significance. Setting is often assessed in terms of visual relationships, however other relevant factors can include noise, smell, or the way in which an asset is encountered within its surroundings.

3 OBJECTIVES OF THIS DOCUMENT

The purpose of this document is to lay out information that is known for the proposed development site and its immediate environs that

will allow for a prediction of the impact of the proposed development by establishing the extent, nature and importance of any heritage assets within the affected area (following Planning for the Historic Environment Historic Environment Planning Practice Guide 2010).

More specific aims of the assessment are:

- to establish the potential impact of the proposed development upon any buried archaeological remains.

3.1 Scope

This assessment comprises an appraisal of the results of a field evaluation undertaken by Headland Archaeology (UK) Ltd, an Archaeological Desk-top Survey (EM Heritage Solutions 2013), archaeological reports from sites in the Wednesbury area, and the geo-technical report produced by Sandwell Borough Council. An initial assessment of the potential direct and indirect impacts of the proposed development on the cultural heritage resource is made subsequent to this. Cultural heritage assets are here defined as all Scheduled Monuments, Listed Buildings, Conservation Areas, Registered Battlefields, Registered Parks & Gardens and relict man-made assets pre-dating the First Edition Ordnance Survey mapping (surveyed 1885 in this area) and selected features post-dating this, such as wartime or industrial sites.

3.2 Study areas

The assessment utilised the following study areas:

- Development area, consisting of the land parcel within which the proposed development would be located
- Study area, extending 500m from the centre of the proposed development area. Designated and non-designated cultural heritage assets recorded in the English Heritage database (Pastscape) and national databases were considered to further inform the assessment of the potential for previously unrecorded cultural heritage assets to exist within the Study Area; designated assets were considered in relation to potential effects upon setting.

4 ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The following information is a combination of that provided in the desk based study by EM Solutions (2013) and the results of previous archaeological investigations in the area. The Monument numbers from the National Record or the Historic Environment reference are shown in Appendix 1.

4.1 Prehistoric

Evidence for prehistoric activity in the area is limited. Inside the study area two sherds of prehistoric pottery were discovered during the evaluation of the High Bullen Service Station in 2008, which is at the northern point of the study area (Duncan, 2010). An original settlement is believed to be on Church Hill to the north-west of the development site and as such would suggest limited activity took place in the development area.

Illus 2

1890 OS County Series Map

Illus 3

1903 OS County Series Map

4.2 Romano-British

To date there has been no evidence for Romano-British settlement in the area of Wednesbury.

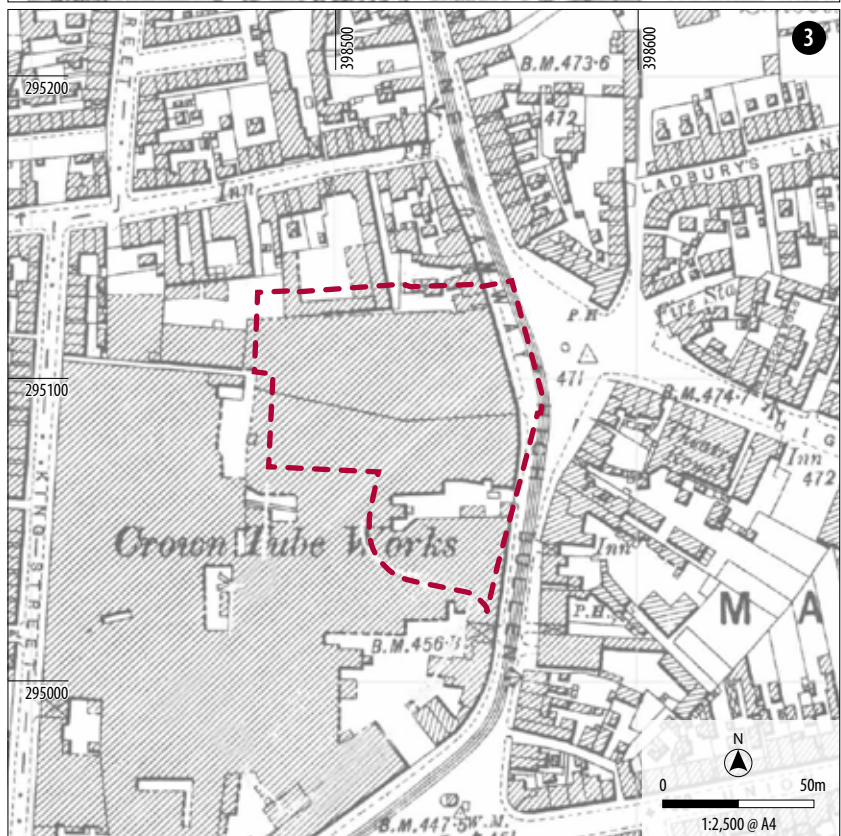
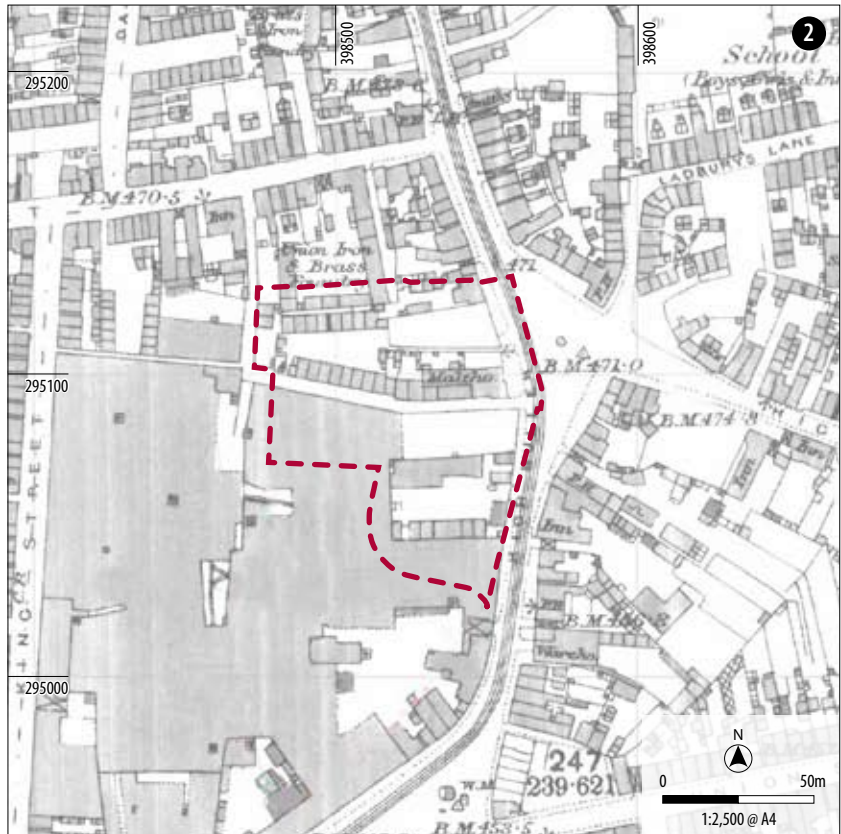
4.3 Saxon

The name Wednesbury (Wadnesberie) has origins in the Anglo-Saxon period and suggests there was a settlement here at this time. However, there has been no archaeological evidence recovered from the area. An excavation in 2008 along St Mary's Road uncovered a large defensive ditch running around Church Hill and suggests the site was fortified before the 11th century (Eyre-Morgan and Noble, 2013). A single sherd of 11th century pottery was recovered from the upper fill of one of the exposed sections of the ditch, but unfortunately the evaluation was spatially limited and the origins of this ditch remain purely speculative.

4.4 Medieval

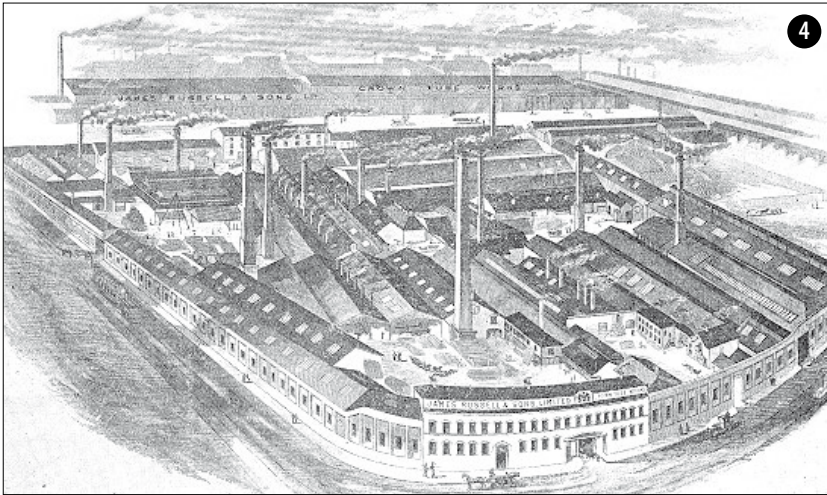
During the medieval period the market place shifted from Church Hill to directly east and south east of the development site. Archaeological work undertaken south of Meeting Street in 2006 revealed a substantial ditch running north-south and probably served as the western side of a boundary ditch circling this new centre. A large amount of domestic wares from the civil war period in the 17th century was recovered from its fill and it has been suggested by Coates (2006) that the ditch was deliberately back-filled during this period.

The excavation undertaken ahead of the construction of the Morrisons petrol station in 2008, also within the study area, revealed a good level of archaeological preservation (Eyre-Morgan and Noble, 2013). Three structures were unearthed producing ceramics (table and kitchen ware) from the 13th-18th centuries, and also evidence for later industrial development associated with the developing cottage industries of the medieval and post-medieval town (Eyre-Morgan and Noble, 2013).



4.5 Post-medieval

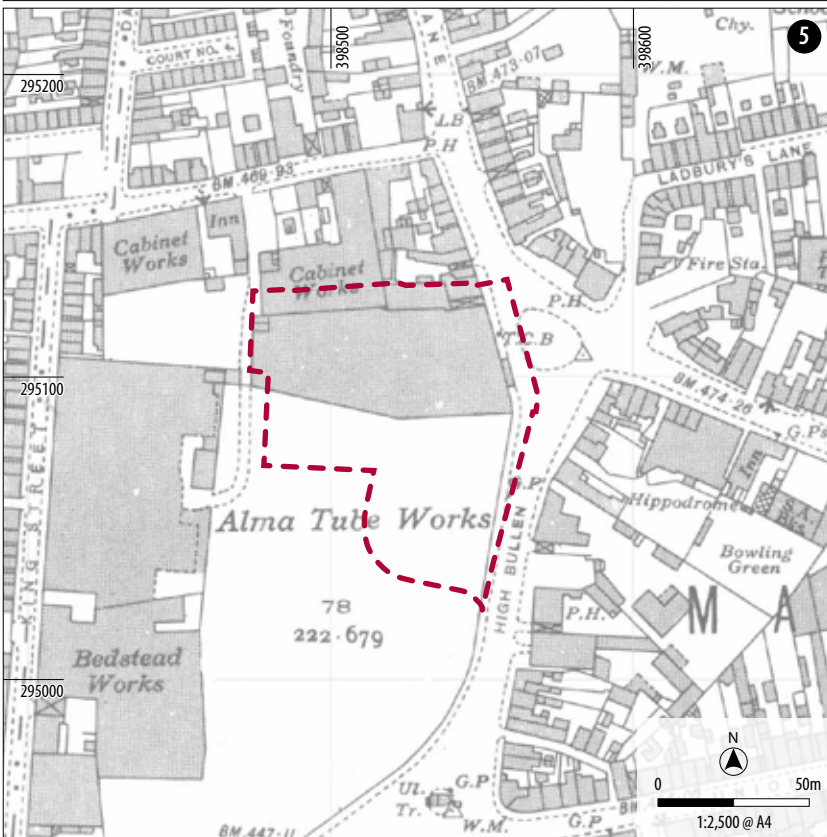
The post-medieval period represents the bulk of all archaeological evidence recovered from this area and the Wednesbury Town Centre Development, undertaken on behalf of Morrison's by Birmingham Archaeology, has confirmed the location and layout of a 16th-17th century 'Wednesbury Ware' production site (Eyre-Morgan and Noble,



4

Illus 4

Crown Tube Works Factory c.1880



5

Illus 5

1937 OS County Series Map

initially run by James Russell who had, along with his brother John, developed sockets to create parallel tubing at the turn of the 19th century. Along with patents to speed up the manufacturing process the factory became internationally renowned and manufacturing included iron and steel tubes for gas, steam, oil and water mains, bedsteads, coils, machinery, to name but a few.

It is entirely possible that foundations, engine pits, and floor slabs may still exist under the ground and that the construction of this factory has removed previous archaeological features. Historical OS maps from the late 19th and early 20th century show the factory extending all the way to King's Street, placing the core around the area of the leisure centre (Illus 3).

A Baptist chapel is known to have existed on the southern tip of the study area, but only appears on the 1846 Tithe map (Eyre-Morgan and Noble, 2013; Figure 6). A plan (undated) of the area before the Tube Works was constructed reveals a reservoir in the south west corner, although it does not appear on any maps before or after this plan (Eyre-Morgan and Noble, 2013; Figure 7).

5 METHODS

5.1 Documentary research

The following sources were consulted:

- Databases of designated assets held by English Heritage (Appendix 1);
- EM Heritage Solutions 'Land Proposed for the New Wednesbury Leisure Centre and PCT at High Bullen, Wednesbury: An Archaeological Desk-top Study' by G. Eyre-Morgan, and P. Noble.
- Archaeological reports of works undertaken in the Wednesbury area;
- Sandwell MBC Phase 1 geo-environmental report prepared by S. Morris in 2012;
- Other readily accessible published and online sources such as the British Geological Survey.

5.2 Archaeological evaluation

Site visits have been conducted in the proposed development area. The site is currently a car park and as such no archaeology is visible on

2013). There has been evidence collected from archaeological works to suggest that the medieval town ditch, back-filled during the 17th century, was subsequently reused by the pottery industry with water tanks being cut along its alignment, which may have been used to process clay. In addition kilns, walled structures, ditches, gullies, post-holes, and pits were discovered associated with the pottery production (Eyre-Morgan and Noble, 2013). Other industrial activity in the area includes coal and iron production, with documentary evidence placing the beginning of these industries in the 14th century and they continued through to the 19th and 20th centuries. As a result the area is full of underground shafts.

4.6 The industrial period and modern era

The development area itself lies within the site of the former Crown Tube Works built in 1823 with most of the original structure demolished in the 1920s, the final remnant was removed in 1989. The factory was

the ground. Geotechnical surveys were undertaken on the 17th–18th October 2013 with an archaeologist present during the excavation.

An archaeological evaluation was undertaken by Headland Archaeology (UK) Ltd in December 2013 in the southern part of the development area on the site of the new swimming pool and leisure centre. Three 20m trenches were excavated to a maximum depth of 1.20m, with a sondage excavated in each to establish the depth of the overburden within the development site. The trenches were located in areas where there would be a high possibility of transecting the medieval town ditch, the Baptist Chapel, and the reservoir mentioned on 19th century mapping. The results are discussed below.

6 RESULTS

6.1 Designated Assets within the study area

There are nine listed buildings and one park of special historical interest within the Wednesbury area, none of which lie within the proposed development site or study area.

6.2 Previous archaeological work

Year	Type of work	Title	Publisher
1983	Excavation	Excavations at Oakeswell Hall	South Staffordshire Archaeological and Historical Society Transactions
1989	Excavation	Excavations in Wednesbury 1988–1989	South Staffordshire Archaeological and Historical Society Transactions
1992	Excavation	Excavations at Upper Russell Street/The Shambles	BUFAU Report No. 218
1996	Evaluation	An Archaeological Evaluation at Walsall Street/Pritchard Street	BUFAU Report No.427
2006	Watching Brief	Wednesbury Bus Station	Birmingham Archaeology (PN1142)
	Evaluation	Land adjacent to 4 Meeting Street	Phoenix Consulting Ltd
	Excavation	Archaeological Excavation at Lower High Street	Ironbridge Archaeological Series (No 175)
2007	Evaluation	Monarch's Gate, King Street	–
		Land off Queen Street and Meeting Street	Birmingham Archaeology (PN1709)
		Wednesbury Town Centre Redevelopment: Stage 2	Birmingham Archaeology (Report 1518)
		Camp Hill Lane	Birmingham Archaeology (Report 15)
	Building Recording + Evaluation	The Assembly Hall, Wellcroft Street	Birmingham Archaeology (Report 1580)
	Excavation	Archaeological Excavations at Wednesbury Forge, St Paul's Road	Ironbridge Archaeological Series (No 201)

Year	Type of work	Title	Publisher
2009	Evaluation	High Bullen Service Station	Birmingham Archaeology (PN1827)
2010	Excavation	High Bullen	Birmingham Archaeology (PN2017)

6.3 Documentary and cartographic evidence

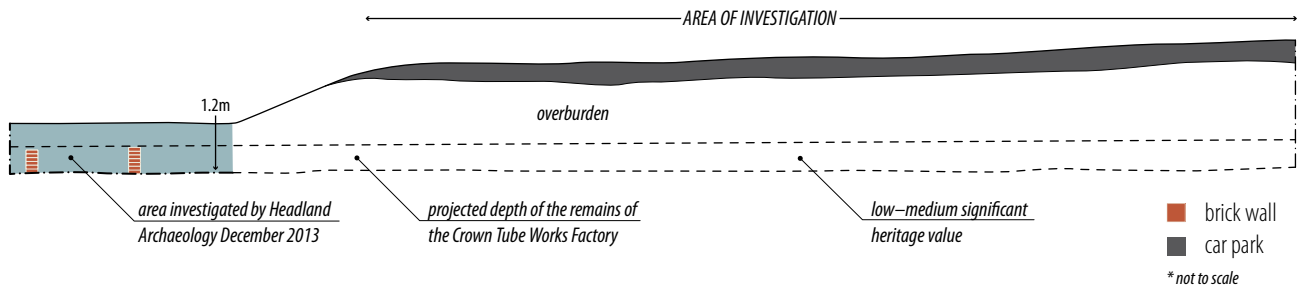
The factory was constructed in 1823 by James Russell. An undated map of his property (Eyre-Morgan and Noble, 2013; Figure 7) shows the land he owned before the construction started. Of note are a number of mine shafts to the west of the development area with associated ponds and a reservoir to the south, all relating to coal working which had been happening in this area for centuries before. By the OS map dated 1890 (Illus 2) the extent of the factory buildings is such that they reach from Dudley Street to King Street covering the site of the mines and the reservoir. The core of the factory is to the south of the development site, underneath what is now the leisure centre, but even by this point there were buildings relating to the works covering the development area. Illus 4 shows a representative image of the factory at around 1880, facing towards the west, which shows the area to the north as an open yard surrounded by sheds. By 1903 (Illus. 3) the tube works had extended further north demolishing a cluster of houses which would be located today beneath the surgery. The whole area is shown as one large structure which covers the development area completely. The factory is partially demolished in the 1920s and a later OS map of 1937 (Illus. 5) shows that buildings exist in the northern part of the development area, underneath the surgery, and to the west along King Street. These buildings were still in use in the 1970s, the one along King Street as a Tube Works and the one within the development site as a steel works. In 1989 they were finally demolished to make way for a new leisure centre.

6.4 Results of the geo-technical evaluation

The following description summarises the results of geotechnical investigations carried out on the site in 2012 (Morris, 2012) and October 2013 by geo-technical engineers, the latter with an archaeologist present. In 2013 the hand excavated pits were located within the car parks that once served the leisure centre. The car park to the doctor's surgery to the immediate north was not investigated during this phase of works, although it was noted that the ground level here was higher as it was further up the slope. All but one of the pits was taken to a depth of 1.20m, a summary of the deposit depths has been tabulated below. Pit 3 was only taken down to 0.75m as a barrier was encountered and excavation could not proceed further.

The pits were very similar in nature. The car park sloped gently to the south and the pits towards the bottom of the slope displayed evidence of being levelled off by sands and gravel to create a flatter surface for the car park. All were capped with tarmac (approximately 0.08m deep) which came down on to this levelling deposit.

Sealed beneath were two lower levels of made ground consisting of brick, mortar, concrete, ash, bitumen, scrap metal (corrugated iron, metal bars), and in the case of the southern-most pit, asbestos, although not all of the pits reached the lower of these deposits. The depth of the upper deposit was between 0.60m and 1m and was loose, consisting of sands and gravels, sometimes overlying another more compact deposit of made ground. This layer contained similar debris as the upper layer



Illus 6

Projected heritage assets based on work undertaken by Headland in December 2013

and was generally made up of sand and gravel, but contained more patches of silt and clay. This layer was not bottomed in any of the pits. These layers represent the demolition and subsequent levelling of the Crown Tube Works factory in the 20th century.

Pit	Total depth of hard standing deposit	Total depth of demolition deposit	Total depth of pit
HEP05	0.08	1.11	1.20
HEP06	0.08	1.12	1.20
HEP07	0.24	1.08	1.20
HEP08	0.20	1.00	1.20
HEP09	0.20	1.00	1.20
HEP10	0.22	0.53	0.75

The test pits confirmed the presence of a significant depth of made ground covering the site, first encountered in 1984 during the construction of the Leisure Centre to the west. The data collected at that time placed the deposit between 2.50m and 4.25m in depth. Borehole data collected to the south in June 2013 produced results between 2.20m and 3.20m in depth. In conclusion, these results and the results collected in October 2013 confirm that the depth of the made up ground on the development site is over 1.20m and may be as much as 2.50m below the ground level.

6.5 Summary results of the 2013 Leisure Centre archaeological evaluation

The aims of the evaluation were to identify whether there were significant archaeological deposits that might be impacted on by the development proposals. The trenches were positioned to maximize the chances of picking up the medieval town ditch, the reservoir, and the Baptist chapel.

Neither the town ditch nor the Baptist Chapel were encountered although evidence for the reservoir filled with 19th century detritus was picked up beneath the swimming pool, supporting the documentary evidence suggesting this was in-filled so the factory could be built upon it. The level of overburden on the site extended beyond 1.20m, evidence for the factory in the form of wall foundations and possible floor surfaces were observed approximately 1m below the ground surface, extending deeper in the case of a possible chimney flue or furnace discovered in trench 2.

7 DISCUSSION

The overburden which covers the site represents the remains of the Crown Tube Works factory. Evidence for the factory has been observed during geo-technical test pitting and the 2013 evaluation, and in places has been seen to extend lower than 1.20m below ground level. Further features relating to this structure may be revealed during construction works (such as engine pits, floor slabs, and foundations) as these were picked up in the evaluation trenches at approximately 1.00m below ground level (Illus 6).

The medieval boundary ditch is known from the results from previous excavations to run north-south through the study area and then turn to the south-east once it passes underneath Dudley Street. Unfortunately the evaluation undertaken to the south by Headland Archaeology did not find evidence for it, although there is a possibility the excavations did not go deep enough through the overburden, placing it over 1.20m beneath ground level if it does survive. The proposed development area for the car park lies to the north of the core of the factory and so there is an increased probability for the survival of the ditch here, as larger structures, like chimneys, tend to occupy the south of the site. The extension of the factory took part relatively late in its lifespan and was only extant around 20 years before being demolished. It is entirely possible that medieval features may have survived this development and are buried beneath the overburden.

No evidence for pottery manufacture or the Baptist Chapel was observed during the archaeological investigations on the development site. The exact location of the Chapel is unclear but it does seem to be somewhere to the south of the development area and therefore not likely to be impacted upon during this development. Evidence for 17th century pottery manufacturing is likely to be buried beneath the overburden, if it has not been truncated by the factory's construction in later years.

8 SUMMARY OF POTENTIAL IMPACTS

8.1 Known Heritage Assets

There is a known factory site, The Crown Tube Works, dating to between 1823 and the 1920s beneath the proposed development site. The size of the factory on the Ordnance Survey Maps of 1890 and 1903 (Illus. 2 and 3) suggests the development site will sit within

the boundaries of it with the core of the factory being approximately where the original leisure centre building stood.

A medieval boundary ditch is known to run through the site but as yet it has not been confirmed whether this has survived the construction, and subsequent development, of the Crown Tube Works factory. Archaeological evaluation has proved inconclusive as to whether it still survives or not due to the depth of the overburden covering the area.

The evaluation trenches to the south of the site unearthed the remains of the reservoir mapped in the 19th century beneath the swimming pool. No evidence of the Baptist Chapel has been found but it is believed to lie to the south of the development area.

8.2 Potential Heritage Assets

There is a low possibility of remains dating to the prehistoric or Romano-British within the development area. There is a moderate possibility of recovering finds from the medieval period and a high possibility of remains from the Post-medieval period. The site has been used for industrial purposes during the post-medieval and early 20th century and therefore has been heavily developed.

Description of potential HA	Significance of potential HA (High, Medium, Low, Negligible)	Likelihood of it occurring within the DA (High, Medium, Low, Negligible)
Possible remains of prehistoric date	High (due to scarcity of recorded prehistoric activity in the vicinity)	Low
Possible remains of Romano-British date	High (due to scarcity of recorded Romano-British activity in the vicinity)	Low
Possible remains of medieval date	Medium (importance related to development of urban medieval settlement and industrial workings)	High (Medieval boundary ditch is projected to run through the development site)
Post-medieval industrial works	Low/medium (in landscape dominated by similar structures; only foundations remain – but this factory first of its kind in the country)	High (development is located on the site of the Crown Tube Works factory)

9 IMPACT ASSESSMENT

9.1 Description of proposed development

The proposed development is for the construction of new car parks associated with the construction of a new Leisure Centre and PCT Health Centre. An application (DC/08/50301) has been submitted for the development, which will involve ground disturbing activity that could have destructive effect upon any archaeological remains within the footprint of the works.

9.2 What are the direct impacts on heritage assets?

The known impacts on the site at present relate to the location of infrastructure (i.e. Roads, car parks) and locations for buildings. There are no known plans for the development to extend lower than 1m below ground level.

A number of heritage assets in the form of industrial and medieval archaeological features are likely to be present on the site. The medieval archaeology runs through the centre of the site and the industrial archaeology underlies the entirety of the development area. The depth of made ground, as investigated in 1984 during the construction of the Leisure Centre, found that the site was covered in a layer of made ground in the form of heterogeneous industrial materials (coke, slag, ash) colliery spoil, demolition spoil and in situ concrete and brick walls, and was proved to be between 2.50m and 4.65m thick (Morris, 2012). Investigations into these deposits by a geo-technical investigation undertaken in October 2013 and by archaeological investigations undertaken in December 2013 confirmed they extended below 1m in depth. As such the development will only be interfering with the demolition deposits associated with the Crown Works Tube Factory and not impacting upon anything which may be preserved underneath it (Illus 6).

There is also a potential impact of the proposed development on previously unknown archaeological remains some of which could pre-date the Crown Tube Works. However, it is unlikely due to the depth of the overburden covering the site that any such features would be impacted on.

10 CONCLUSION

The development proposals are in line with the principles laid out in national and local planning policy. They will not affect the significance of known designated heritage assets, and no assets of national significance have been identified that might be affected by the proposed development. Features of local archaeological significance were identified that could have been affected by the proposals, but these are likely to be buried beneath a substantial layer of overburden extending beyond the 1m planned development depth if they survive at all.

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12 APPENDICES

Appendix 1 National Record of the Historic Environment (NRHE) data

Monument	Date of work	Date of site	Description
118791	–	Iron Age	Possible Hill Fort
118752	1817	Roman	Coin hoard. Possibly early 2nd century.
118765	1961–1962	Post-medieval–Modern	Oakeswell Hall; 16th century house with later additions, demolished 1961.
866795	–	Medieval	Wednesbury Settlement
870663	–	Medieval	Medieval street frontage and Post-medieval pottery kiln
956959	–	Modern	Power station
956954	–	Post-medieval	Post-medieval factory demolished 1989
1341356	–	Post-medieval	Walsall Canal; opened 1799.



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**Headland Archaeology
North East**

13 Jane Street
Edinburgh EH6 5HE

0131 467 7705
northeast@headlandarchaeology.com

**Headland Archaeology
North West**

10 Payne Street
Glasgow G4 0LF

0141 354 8100
northwest@headlandarchaeology.com

**Headland Archaeology
Midlands & West**

Unit 1, Premier Business Park, Faraday Road
Hereford HR4 9NZ

01432 364 901
midlandsandwest@headlandarchaeology.com

**Headland Archaeology
South & East**

Building 68A, Wrest Park, Silsoe
Bedfordshire MK45 4HS

01525 861 578
southandeast@headlandarchaeology.com

www.headlandarchaeology.com