

RWSH/01



LAND TO THE REAR OF 86/94 WIDEMARSH STREET, HEREFORD

Archaeological Watching Brief

commissioned by Bluebell Properties

120899/131042

August 2014

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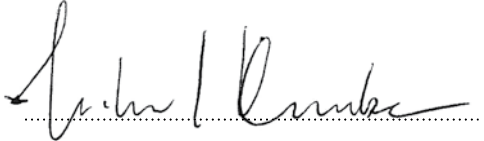
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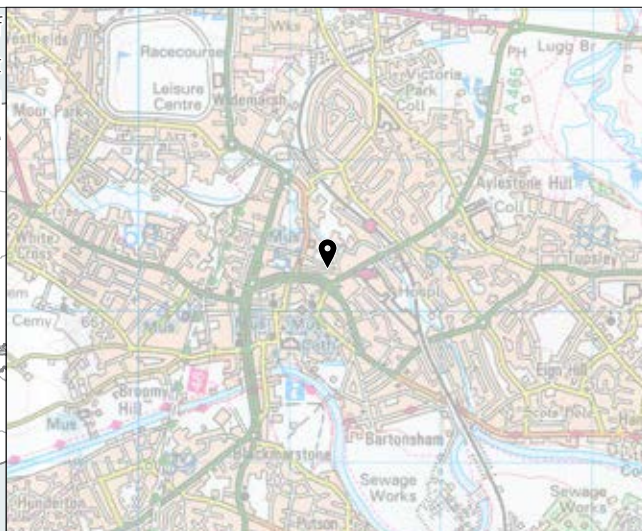
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<p>Reproduced using 2006 OS 1:50,000 Landranger Series no. 149 and digital data. Ordnance Survey © Crown copyright 2014. All rights reserved. Licence no. AL 100013329</p>	<p>scale 1:400 @ A4</p>	<p>0  20m</p>
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ILLUS 1
Site location

LAND TO THE REAR OF 86/94 WIDEMARSH STREET, HEREFORD

Archaeological Watching Brief

Headland Archaeology (UK) Ltd undertook trial trenching to satisfy a planning condition placed on the construction of houses to the rear of Widemarsh Street. No significant archaeological remains were discovered as the area had been heavily disturbed in the post-medieval period. A buried soil was identified but no archaeological remains were observed beneath it during this scheme of work. Otherwise the work only identified phases of late 19th and 20th century activity on the site.

1 INTRODUCTION

Headland Archaeology (UK) Ltd conducted trial trenching on land to the rear of 86/94 Widemarsh Street, Hereford. The work was commissioned by Bluebell Properties Ltd and was undertaken in order to satisfy outline planning consent (131274/131042) for the demolition of existing commercial premises and construction of four new residential dwellings, with associated car parking and external areas.

The trenching falls within the Hereford Area of Archaeological Importance. The client submitted appropriate documentation for the works under the Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act 1979. As such discussions with Herefordshire Council's archaeological advisor determined that in light of the likelihood of recent disturbance within the development area a pre-development trial trench will assist in clarifying whether or not further mitigation measures such as a watching brief during construction is required.

The site is located on the east side of Widemarsh Street, to the north of the defended medieval city. It is currently a back plot or yard. The underlying geology is Older fluvio-glacial gravels overlying Old Red Sandstone.

2 ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

Speede's schematic 1610 map of Hereford shows little indication of any activity in the area south of Blackfriars Priory where the

site lies. Map progression indicates that this area was a meadow or under cultivation throughout the following centuries. The 1st edition Ordnance Survey map of the area (1886) also shows that the development area was open ground. At a later date the development area was subdivided into back gardens for tenements built along the south side of Coningsby Street.

The most significant known archaeology in the vicinity of the site is the precinct of Blackfriars, a Scheduled Ancient Monument to the north of the site (Shoesmith 1994). The presence of the monastic site may have influenced land use in its surrounds. Coningsby Street is regarded as the limit of the southern boundary of the Friary precinct (Rouse 2004). Excavations on the corner of Coningsby Street and Canal Road show that there was a high level of modern disturbance and no definitive friary levels were encountered. These excavations also encountered pits related to the disposal of glass and stoneware dating to the 19th century (Thomas 1990).

Previous work on the site undertaken by Headland Archaeology in 2010 revealed large 19th century pits filled with demolition deposits. The natural gravel was observed 1.1–1.6m below ground level with no archaeological features cut into it (Doyle 2010).

3 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

The objectives of this program of works were as follows:

- to enable the development by fulfilling the archaeological condition to the satisfaction of the planning authority;



ILLUS 2

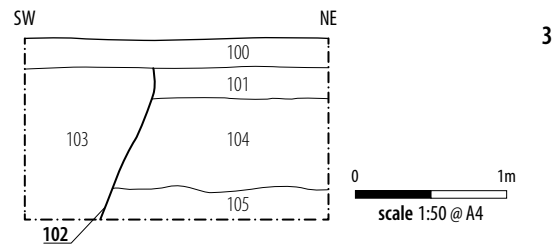
Section of Trench 1, facing SE, showing [102]

ILLUS 3

Section of Trench 1, facing SE



- to establish the location, extent, nature and date of archaeological features or deposits that may be present within the areas proposed to be disturbed during the development;
- to establish the integrity and state of preservation of archaeological features or deposits that may be present within the areas proposed to be disturbed during the development;
- to inform the Local Planning Authority regarding an appropriate mitigation strategy;
- to produce and deposit a satisfactory archive and disseminate the results of the work via grey-literature reporting and publication as appropriate.



4 METHOD

All trenches were excavated using a mechanical excavator with a toothless bucket under archaeological supervision.

Trench 1 measured 2m x 2.2m in plan and was located in the west of the site. The trench was excavated to a depth of 1.2m where natural deposits were encountered. Trench 2 measured 2.2m x 2m in plan and was located in the middle of the site. This trench was excavated to natural gravels at a depth of 1.4m. Trench 3 measured 5m x 2m and was to the east of the site. This trench was excavated to a depth of 1.8m before natural deposits were encountered.

All recording followed standard archaeological guidelines as set out by the Institute for Archaeologists (IfA). All contexts were given unique numbers. No small finds or environmental samples were taken as no significant archaeological deposits were encountered. All recording was undertaken on pro forma record cards that conform to accepted archaeological norms. Photographs of archaeological features and deposits were taken using 35mm monochrome and colour slide film, registers were kept for context records, photographs and drawings.

5 RESULTS

Three trenches were excavated in the footprints of the new residential dwellings.

Trench 1 was 2m x 2m (Illus 2, 3) and excavated to a depth of 1.2m. The tarmac road and hardcore sealed the deposits and was 0.2m thick. Underneath was (101), a dark black brown silt clay with rare inclusions of post-medieval pottery, charcoal, coal, and brick. All were broken into small pieces. This layer was 0.2m deep. Beneath

(101) was (104), a dark yellow brown silt clay with occasional gravels 0.6m deep. Very few finds were recovered from this layer and were similar to (101) in that they were all quite broken and were post-medieval in date. The natural gravels (105) were encountered below this layer. Cutting through (101), (104) and (105) to the south of the trench was [102] a feature 0.8m wide which extended out of the boundaries of the trench. It had steep sides and was excavated to a depth of 1m but was still continuing down into (105). The fill (103) was a dark silt clay with abundant amounts of post-medieval tile, brick, glass, pottery, metal, and animal bone. This material was a mixture of broken up and intact finds.

Trench 2 was 2m x 2m (Illus 4, 5) and was 1.4m deep. As with Trench 1 it was sealed by a layer of tarmac and hardcore (200) 0.2m in depth. To the north the brick and concrete foundations of the pre-existing workshop were observed, [208], (202) and (203), extending into the trench by 0.5m and continuing outside the limits of excavation. These foundations were 0.4m deep. [208] was cut into (206), a layer very similar to (104) with a depth of 0.7m. (206) overlay the natural gravels (207). To the south a large feature [204] 1.5m wide was encountered which was cut by the foundations [208] on its northern edge. This feature was very similar to [102] in that it cut through the previous deposit (206), had steep edges and, although excavated to 1.2m, continued down through the natural and outside the limits of the trench. The fill (205) was similar in composition to (103) in that it was predominantly made up of post-medieval demolition rubbish.

Trench 3 was 5m x 2m and excavated to 0.8m, with a sondage extending to 1.8m to establish the depth of the natural. The length of the trench had to be extended because a concrete



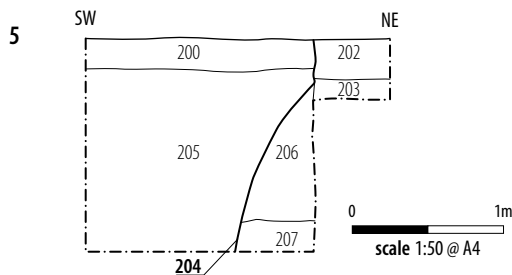
ILLUS 4

Section of Trench 2, facing SE, showing [204]

ILLUS 5

Section of Trench 2, facing SE

Features [102] and [204] cut through all earlier leveling deposits and are only post-dated by the concrete foundations of the workshop seen in Trench 2. It is impossible to say if they are the same feature but are likely to be contemporary and represent a demolition episode. The finds and material contained within these fills suggests the demolition of a mixture of industrial and residential buildings. This demolition episode is probably the same event witnessed in the 2010 evaluation to the east of these trenches.



surface (302) was encountered and could not be broken through. This trench was sealed by (300), which was a layer of hard standing created to level out the site after the demolition of the workshop whose foundations are represented by [303] and (304). [303] was not seen in its entirety but was 0.5m wide and extended across the length of the trench. The fill (304) was a brick wall foundation which had been demolished by the construction workers prior to the archaeological work. The rest of Trench 3 comprised a layer (301) similar to (101) around 0.51m in depth overlaying (305) which was the same as (104) and (206) and was 0.8m deep. The natural gravels were encountered below (305).

6 DISCUSSION

The area has been heavily disturbed by post-medieval and modern activity. (104), (206) and (305) are the same layer and represent a buried soil horizon extending over the site which is likely to be the original ground surface for this area prior to its development. Although heavily truncated this layer is more intact to the west of the site. No archaeological features were observed below this layer during these works. Overlying this buried horizon is (101) and (301), an early post-medieval leveling event which again extends across the site. Evidence for this layer may be lacking in Trench 2 due to the disturbance which occurred later.

7 REFERENCES

- Doyle, D 2010 *Land to the Rear of 86/94 Widemarsh Street, Hereford*, Headland Archaeology (UK) Ltd.
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- Shoosmith, R 1994 *Blackfriars Precinct. A Desk-based Archaeological Survey of the Blackfriars Area of Hereford*, HAS 207.
- Thomas, D 1990 *Blackfriars Hereford. Evaluation Excavations*, HAS 85.



APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1 SITE REGISTERS

Context register

Trench	Context	Description	Dimensions (m)
01	100	Tarmac and rubble hardcore. L: +2m, W: +2m, D: 0.2m.	D: 1.2
	101	Dark brown silt clay with occasional sub-rounded stones, a clear, smooth interface and a firm, friable consistency. Rare amounts of post-medieval pottery, charcoal, coal, brick and CBM (all very broken up). L: +2m, W: +1.1m, D: +0.2m. Early post-medieval levelling, cut by [102].	W: 2 L: 2
	102	Cut of feature. Linear in plan with steep sides and a sharp break of slope. Base not reached. L: +2m, W: 0.8m, D: +1m. Demolition pit, late post-medieval. Filled by (103).	
	103	Dark black brown silty clay with a sharp, smooth interface and a loose, friable consistency. Contains abundant amounts of post-medieval pottery, glass, animal bone, brick, tile and metal. L: +2m, W: 0.8m, D: +1m. Fill of [102].	
	104	Mid yellow brown silty clay with occasional rounded stones and frequent gravels, a clear smooth interface and a firm moist consistency. L: +2m, W: +2m, D: 0.6m. Buried soil horizon. Cut by [102].	
	105	Natural. Light pink brown gravels and clay with a clear wavy interface and a loose, dry consistency.	
02	200	Tarmac and rubble hardcore. L: +2m, W: +2m, D: 0.2m.	D: 1.4
	202	Brick foundation of modern workshop. L: 2m+, W: 0.5m+, D: 0.26m. Fill of [208].	W: 2 L: 2
	203	Concrete foundation of modern workshop. L: 2m+, W: 0.5m+, D: 0.14m. Fill of [208].	
	204	Cut of feature. Linear in plan with steep sides and a sharp break of slope. Base not reached. L: +2m, W: 1.5m, D: +1m. Demolition pit, late post-medieval. Filled by (205).	
	205	Dark black brown silty clay with a sharp, smooth interface and a loose, friable consistency. Contains abundant amounts of post-medieval pottery, glass, animal bone, brick, tile and metal. L: +2m, W: 1.5m, D: +1m. Fill of [204].	
	206	Mid yellow brown silty clay with occasional rounded stones and frequent gravels, a clear smooth interface and a firm moist consistency. L: +2m, W: +2m, D: 0.6m. Buried soil horizon. Cut by [208]+[204].	
	207	Natural. Light pink brown gravels and clay with a clear wavy interface and a loose, dry consistency.	
	208	Cut of foundation for modern workshop. L: +2m, W: +0.5m, D: 0.4m. Filled by (202)+(203).	
03	300	Hardstanding. L: +5m, W: +2m, D: 0.3m	D: 1.8 W: 2 L: 5
	301	Dark brown silt clay with occasional sub-rounded stones, a clear, smooth interface and a firm, friable consistency. Rare amounts of post-medieval pottery, charcoal, coal, brick and CBM (all very broken up). L: +3m, W: +2m, D: 0.51m.	
	302	Concrete foundation of modern workshop. L: 2m+, W: 3m+, D: 0.14m.	
	303	Cut of foundation for boundary wall. L: +2m, W: 0.5m. Filled by (304), cuts (301).	
	304	Brick foundation of boundary wall. L: 2m+, W: 0.5m+, D: 0.26m. Fill of [303].	
	305	Mid yellow brown silty clay with occasional rounded stones and frequent gravels, a clear smooth interface and a firm moist consistency. L: +2m, W: +3m, D: 0.8m. Buried soil horizon.	
	306	Natural. Light pink brown gravels and clay with a clear wavy interface and a loose, dry consistency.	

Photographic register

Photo	Colour	B/W	Digital	Facing	Description
01	01	37	01	—	ID Shot
02	02	36	02	N	Tr1 – mid-excavation section
03	03	35	03	W	Tr1 – mid-excavation section
04	04	34	04	W	Tr1 – mid-excavation plan
05	05	33	05	W	Tr1 – mid-excavation section
06	06	32	06	W	Tr2 – mid-excavation section and plan
07	07	31	07	S	Tr3 – plan
08	08	30	08	W	Tr3 – mid-excavation section
09	09	29	09	—	Tr2 – selection of finds from (203)
10	10	28	10	E	Tr3 – section of sondage
11	—	—	11	S	Tr3 – shot of wooden post in (301)
12	11	27	12	W	Tr1 – section [102]
13	12	26	13	S	Tr2 – section [204]
14	13	25	14	—	Tr2 – selection of finds from (203)
15	—	—	15	—	Tr2 – demolition fill (203)
16	14	24	16	W	Tr2 – section [204]

Drawing register

Drawing	Scale	Plan/Section	Description
01	1:10	S	Tr1 – section facing E
02	1:10	S	Tr2 – section facing E



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