

NSRH/01



A49 NEWMARKET STREET ROUNDABOUT

Archaeological Watching Brief

commissioned by Amey Plc

June 2014

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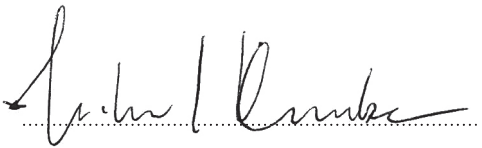
June 2014

project info

HA JOB NO. NSRH/01
HAS NO. 1011
NGR SO 50748 40195
LOCAL AUTHORITY Herefordshire
OASIS REF. headland-3

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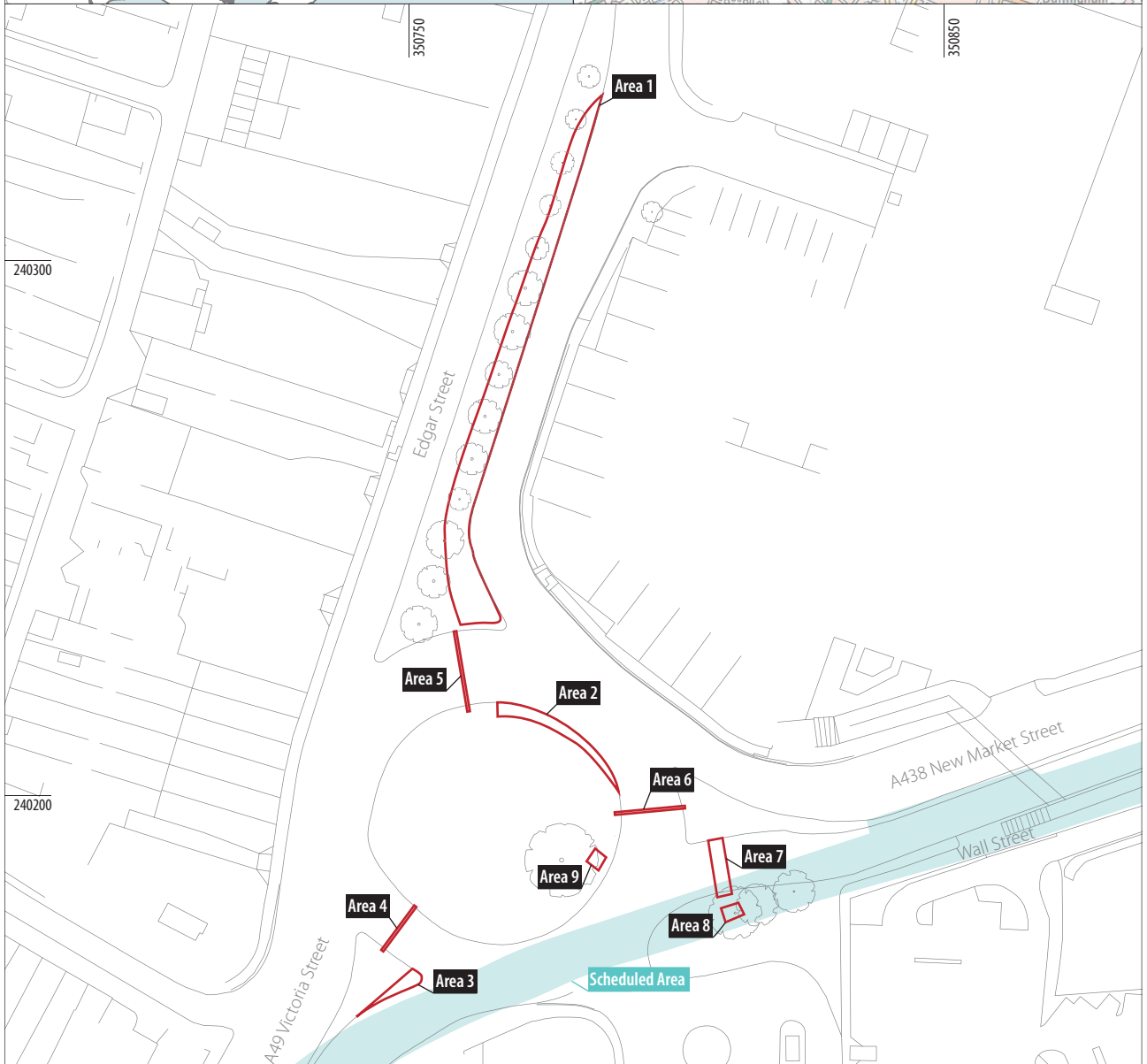
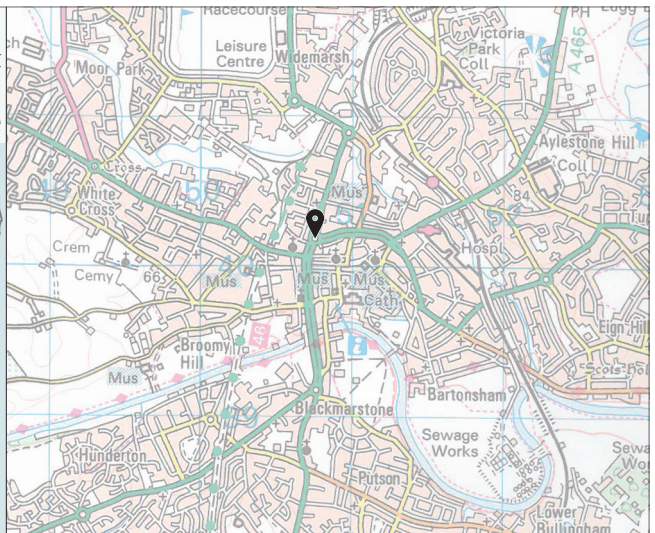
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land at
New Market Street
Hereford
Herefordshire



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A49 NEWMARKET STREET ROUNDABOUT

Archaeological Watching Brief

A programme of archaeological monitoring was carried out during works involving the widening of the A49 Southbound to create a third lane at the junction of the Newmarket Street roundabout. Associated work on new traffic signals and drainage was also monitored. The works area included part of Hereford's medieval defences, and was within the Hereford Area of Archaeological Importance. No evidence of any historic activity earlier than the Victorian period was observed; a direct result of the limited depth of the works required in relation to the overall depth of modern deposits within the vicinity of the roundabout. The works may have encountered the top of an intact soil horizon at a depth of 500mm below the roundabout carriageway.

1 INTRODUCTION

Headland Archaeology (UK) Ltd was commissioned by Amey Plc to conduct a program of archaeological monitoring to be carried out during the widening and improvement works conducted on the A49 Newmarket Street Roundabout, Hereford.

It was considered that there was potential for deeper interventions within the scheme of the planned works to reach medieval deposits relating to the city ditch and defences, so consequently ground works that exceeded 300mm below the present level were monitored and examined by an archaeologist.

All works were undertaken in accordance with a Written Scheme of Investigation (Kimber 2013) produced in response to a Brief issued by archaeological advisor to the Planning Authority for Herefordshire Council (2013).

2 SITE DESCRIPTION

The project site consists of a large roundabout and its environs off Newmarket Street in central Hereford; the area has been subject to recent development and resurfacing of the highway over the years.

3 BACKGROUND

Medieval Hereford was surrounded by a deep defensive ditch and stone walls. The defensive ditch ran north from the River Wye following the line of the modern Victoria Street to Newmarket Street Roundabout, where it turned east, following the line of

the modern Newmarket Street. The location of the improvement works was therefore at the north-west corner of Hereford's medieval defences.

The town ditch was probably around 12m wide and over four metres deep. The inner side of the ditch was originally defended by a gravel rampart, before this was replaced by a stone wall in the late 13th century. This section of the city's medieval defences falls within the Hereford Area of Archaeological Importance. The town wall itself is a scheduled ancient monument.

4 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

The aims and objectives of the archaeological evaluation were to:

- establish the presence or absence of significant archaeological remains;
- determine the significance, degree of survival and extent of any buried archaeological remains;
- produce a report on the results of the fieldwork in line with the Written Scheme of Investigation and the Herefordshire Archaeology Brief.

5 METHOD

All monitoring was undertaken by an archaeologist of Alfa equivalent experience or higher. The monitored works comprised:

- topsoil strip of the existing central reservation along the A49 Edgar Street approach road (Area 1);



ILLUS 2

General view of section within Area 1, showing modern make-up levels

ILLUS 3

General view within Area 6, showing possible soil horizon at base level of excavated cable trench

ILLUS 4

General view of section within Area 7, showing tarmac at base level of excavated cable trench

- modifications to the central reservation of the roundabout (Area 2);
- minor modifications to the central reservation on the Victoria Street approach (Area 3);
- Excavation of electrical ducting for signals (Areas 4–7, 600mm depth);
- ducting access chambers (Areas 8–9, 640–970mm depth).

The Brief issued by Herefordshire Archaeology suggested that interventions shallower than 300mm need not be monitored. It became clear at an early stage of the works that there was no prospect of archaeological remains occurring within this depth. Excavations of greater depth were monitored and recorded by an archaeologist.

6 RESULTS

6.1 AREA 1

Within Area 1 the work consisted of the strip, excavation and construction of a new south-bound carriageway. The site was excavated to an average depth of 500mm below the present surface. The general make up of the area was topsoil, rubble, drainage service runs and a previous kerb and road edge. At the base of the excavations dumps of modern white china and brick building footings were uncovered. The modern intrusions and build up of the ground levels meant that no archaeological remains were observed. A large drainage run was also noted, indicating further heavy disturbance of the area.

6.2 AREA 2

Within the roundabout complex a section of original kerbing was replaced, the excavation was monitored, however the excavation only exposed evidence of made ground associated with the present roundabout.

6.3 AREA 3

A small section of the central reservation was altered. The original excavation depth was planned to exceed 300mm, however inspection of the base layers indicated that the area did not need excavating to the original design depth, as the underlying layers of hardcore were deemed suitable for the anticipated load bearing capacities. This resulted in just the removal of the present tarmac layer, approximately 100mm thick. No archaeological remains were uncovered.

6.4 AREAS 4, 5 & 7

A series of cable trenches approximately 50mm wide and with a maximum depth of 600mm were excavated across the main carriageway through layers of made ground, consisting of hardcore and tarmac from previous road surfaces. No archaeological remains were observed.

6.5 AREA 6

A cable trench was excavated towards the south of the roundabout to a depth of 500mm. Beneath the associated modern makeup of the carriageway and subsequent resurfacing events a compacted soil horizon was observed. The excavation of the cable trench stopped at this level as the required trench depth had been achieved. No datable finds were observed within the soil horizon. Despite the subsequent levels of hard core associated with the road having been compressed into the surface of the deposit, it is possible that it represents an intact archaeological horizon pre-dating the modern road.

6.6 AREA 8

A small excavation to replace an existing access chamber was undertaken within the area of the scheduled city wall. The excavation identified no archaeological remains due to the area having already been disturbed for the construction of the original access chamber and associated cable ducting.

The anticipated excavation for a new length of cable ducting within the scheduled area was deemed unnecessary as the original cable ducting was in a good enough condition to be re-used.

no datable evidence to place this deposit in its historical context was observed. The reuse of existing cable ducting within the area of the scheduled monument and a previously unidentified drainage run within the southern carriageway meant that the deep ground works that were originally envisaged within the program of works for the redevelopment of the Newmarket Street roundabout were not necessary. The actual depth of survival of archaeological remains in this area therefore remains largely undetermined. It is unlikely that future works would encounter any remains at depths of less than 500mm below existing ground level.

8 ARCHIVE

The project archive will be deposited with Hereford Museum.

9 BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Herefordshire Council 2013 *Brief for an Archaeological Recording Project (Watching Brief) Site of Proposed Highways Works at Newmarket Street Roundabout, Hereford*, Ref a130017s2.
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- IfA 2008 *Standards and Guidance for Archaeological Field Evaluation*.
- Kimber, M 2013 *Site of Proposed Highway Works at A49 Newmarket Street Roundabout, Hereford: Written Scheme of Investigation for Archaeological Watching Brief*, Headland Archaeology (UK) Ltd.
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7 DISCUSSION

The invasive works conducted during the redevelopment of the Newmarket Roundabout and its environs constituted a minimal impact on the area of the medieval city defences. The invasive works only disturbed made ground, comprising layers of hardcore and previous road surfaces in the majority of the excavation areas. Within Area 6 a possible historical soil horizon was noted, however



APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1 SITE REGISTERS

Photographic register

Digital photo	Direction	Description
00	N	Section detail within Area 1
01	N	Section detail within Area 1
02	E	General view within Area 1
03	N	Area 1
04	E	General view within Area 1
05	W	General view within Area 1
06	W	General view within Area 1
07	W	General view within Area 1
08	N	Tarmac strip Area 3
09	S	Tarmac strip Area 3
10	S	Tarmac strip Area 3
11	SW	Tarmac strip Area 3
12	S	Tarmac strip Area 3
13	N	Section detail showing modern make-up Area 4
14	E	Section detail showing modern make-up Area 4
15	N	Section detail showing modern make-up Area 4
16	S	Section detail modern make-up Area 6
17	N	General view of Area 5 excavation
18	NE	General view of Area 7 excavation
19	SW	Section detail of Area 6
20	SW	Section detail of Area 6
21	SW	Section detail of Area 6
22	N	General view of Area 6
23	S	Section detail of Area 7
24	NE	General view of Area 7 and tarmac base level
25	NE	General view of Area 7 and tarmac base level



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